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CHRIST, CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANITY.

BY

E. PLANTA NESBIT.

BOOK I.

JESUS AN ESSENE.

"Search the Scriptures."—*John* v. 39.
"Prove all Things."—1 *Thes.* v. 21.
"There is no Religion higher than Truth."
(The family motto of the Maharajahs of Benares.)

London:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT, & CO., LTD.
1895.

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Succeeding Books to be as follows :—

Book II.—Jesus in Scripture.

Book III.—The Canon of Scripture.

Book IV.—Biblical Results.

Book V.—On Religious Doubts.

Book VI.—Our Religious Teachers.

Book VII.—Concluding Remarks.

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PREFACE.

CHRISTIANITY, its rise, progress and influence on the human race, must necessarily ever cause the deepest interest among thinking men. In the present day, in particular, reflecting persons in various parts of Christendom appear to be moved by one common spirit to examine the foundations of the faith in which they have been brought up. In doing this they are only accepting in a cordial and sincere spirit the invitation so often held out to them by the orthodox teachers of Christianity, who seem never tired of affirming that the more this religion is investigated the more it will shine, the more divine it will appear. But, notwithstanding the apparent confidence of these zealous advocates, it is a remarkable fact that really able and earnest religious inquiries have ever, as a rule, been looked upon with great suspicion and distrust by the accredited custodians of the faith, and in those instances in which investigation has been followed by a departure from the common creed itself, motives of the most unworthy character have been freely

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and unscrupulously imputed to the seceders. It appears to be a foregone conclusion, with many persons, that no fair inquiry into religion is possible except by those who, at the commencement, in the progress, and at the termination of it, have been the professed friends of Christianity, as they themselves understand this religion. But *truth* is usually ignored by warm partisans, circumstances suggestive of doubt are sedulously avoided by them, facts admitting of an interpretation unfavourable to their own cherished views are silently suppressed, and a conclusion determined upon from the beginning is often triumphantly paraded as the necessary but expected result of a searching investigation, which, perhaps, is afterwards presented to the world in some work on the evidences of Christianity, declared, most probably, by its admirers to be unanswerable and incapable of refutation. Nothing can be a more legitimate and worthy pursuit for any man to undertake than a conscientious inquiry into the truth of the religion in which he has been reared, especially if he possesses the means and the ability to prosecute such an investigation, and a sufficient balance of mind to enable him to conduct it with fairness.

The great fact of the existence of a Deity rests on immutable grounds to the vast majority of mankind, as few exercising even a little reflection fail to perceive the

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marks of a Divine intellect and of omnipotent power in the works of creation. But all mere dogmas rest on historical bases, and if we accept these in good faith, we ought surely to be thoroughly convinced that *the facts*, upon which it is affirmed they rest, really happened. If these never occurred, but are simply fabulous or mythical, how is it possible for the doctrines which spring from them to be worthy of credit here, or of vital consequence hereafter? For example, the doctrine of the incarnation rests upon the historical record which tells of the supernatural influence to which the mother of Jesus was subjected previous to his birth. It is, then, of the utmost importance to investigate the value of the narratives which relate to us the meagre particulars of the so-called miraculous nativity; for unless these are found, upon the closest scrutiny, to be worthy of *the highest and most implicit belief*, our reception of the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus must necessarily be shaken, if not destroyed. Again, the doctrine of the atonement rests upon the historical account of the resurrection of Jesus, or, more correctly speaking, of his ascension. It is therefore of the greatest consequence that we should be thoroughly, and on sufficient grounds, convinced not only that Jesus actually died and rose again, but that he was really taken *bodily* into heaven, as we are informed he

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was in those documents which contain the story of his life and death. The evidence that these latter events occurred should be of the strongest description that it is possible to present to the human mind on historical subjects. The vital issues which are said to rest on the *truth* of the birth, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, are such that no flaw whatever should be perceptible in the chain of evidence by which these events are connected together, even when subjected to the most rigorous and impartial scrutiny. If all these circumstances happened as recorded, every sincere inquirer who takes a reasonable amount of trouble to ascertain their reality, should certainly have conviction brought home at once to his mind. Is such undoubting assurance as we speak of always produced in the minds of sincere, ardent and able investigators of the life of Jesus? and if not, what is the cause of the irrepressible doubts and unbelief so many of them feel? All reasonable belief is based upon knowledge and credibility. There are many true events which are but partially believed because they rest on uncertain data. It may be laid down as an indisputable axiom that the obligation to believe anything is diminished in proportion as it is in itself discredited and rejected by our minds, owing to a want of evidence or innate improbability. A thing must

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be true in itself to be really a fit subject for belief, and no amount of *faith* will make that to have happened which never took place. The unreasoning nature of real orthodox faith is a matter of constant rejoicing among certain classes of Christian believers. They tell us that their faith triumphs over all difficulties, of whatever kind, and that it "laughs at impossibilities." Such faith as this is strikingly illustrated by that which a child once showed in its mother's word. Speaking to a youthful companion concerning something its mother had told it, the former exclaimed, "It is so because my mother said so; and, if it was not, it would be, if she said it was." The child's faith was great, and its belief in its mother's veracity perfect; but it left out of its infantile calculations the possibility of her being mistaken; and neither its faith in her truthfulness nor in her testimony could possibly make that to be, which was not. And so in matters relating to Christianity. If certain assumed facts on which this religion is based really never occurred, all the faith in the world will not suffice to create them.

Surely, then, it is of the greatest importance to ascertain the absolute value of the historical records upon which doctrines of the highest significance are built and promulgated, for, if the former are weak, uncertain or untrue,

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little weight can be attached to the latter. It is also of consequence to inquire whether all the phenomena which have attended the rise and progress of Christianity are not capable of explanation on natural grounds. If so, this method ought certainly to be preferred to any which require the assistance of supernatural agencies for their support.

It is admitted by persons of all religions, that there are thousands of individuals not connected with their own respective creeds who believe what they themselves hold to be positively false and untrue. The Christian despises, for reasons of his own, all the miraculous incidents connected with the mission of Mahomed, and the Jew does not believe the events recorded in the New Testament. The Christian never condemns himself for his unbelief as regards his nonconformity with the followers of the prophet of Mecca, and the Jew has no misgivings because he cannot believe with the disciple of Jesus. And, again, there are at the present day thousands upon thousands in the Christian Church itself, whose belief is not uniform as regards even the first elements of their own religion. This remark extends to all the teachers of Christianity as well as to the laity. It is notorious that Roman Catholics, who constitute the vast bulk of professing

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Christians throughout the world, and the ever-increasing variety of Protestant sects, have each and all some special dogmas which they evidently consider it in their particular province to conserve and propagate, above all others, and which doctrines, in fact, are held by them to be almost, if not absolutely, essential for the salvation of mankind. While Roman Catholics openly profess to believe that few or none can reasonably hope for celestial bliss who die outside the pale of their Church, there are numerous Protestants who hold almost similar views respecting their own sect.

The suspicion that Jesus probably belonged to the Jewish sect of the Essenes, was first strongly awakened in the author's mind by a careful perusal of the works of Josephus and of Philo Judæus, but he is quite aware that the same idea has sometimes been entertained, more or less strongly, by others. But nowhere has he seen the details which these two Jewish writers have given of the Essenes so fully compared with the teachings and the life of Jesus, and their agreement so fully demonstrated, as they are in the following pages. It seems surprising that the striking similarity which exists between the purest of the Jewish sects and the founder of Christianity should so long have escaped prominent remark. Readers will be able to

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decide for themselves, after perusing all they will meet with in this work, as to the probability or not of Jesus having been an Essene. Whether they determine in the affirmative or not, they will probably meet with such facts as will cause at least many of them to acknowledge that the great Teacher was deeply imbued with the spirit and doctrines of the Essenes, and that there are ample materials supplied to allow of an explanation being given of his life, and supposed death on the cross, with his after resurrection and ascension, in accordance with natural and ordinary principles.

It was impossible, in an inquiry such as this book contains, for the author to ignore the influence which Judæism and Christianity have mutually exerted on each other. The opinions which the Jews entertain of the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies in the person of Jesus are entitled to the greatest respect, because they, of all people, are the most interested in tracing out, and, if true, in acknowledging their accomplishment in him. But when Christian teachers, of the highest position in the Church of the present day, themselves admit that these prophecies cannot in reality be regarded as literally consummated in the life and death of Jesus, can it be a matter of surprise that the Jews have always held those opinions on

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this subject, to which even Christian divines are now reluctantly and slowly arriving?

In early days and for many years the author was a thoroughly orthodox Christian; but, extending his reading beyond the narrow limits which are the favourite confines of those who dread to have the seeds of doubt sown in their minds, he was compelled to admit to himself that those from whom he had been accustomed to think differently, had some reasonable grounds for their opinions. After being disturbed by this conviction for a long time, he commenced a private inquiry into the foundation, rise and progress of Christianity, in the course of which he had occasion to write the greater part of this book. This plan led him to make numerous extracts from writers of very different views, and in presenting these pages to the public he considers it better to allow the citations he has made to remain, in most instances, in their integrity, than to recast them into his own language, with a marginal reference to the original writers. The latter method of giving one's authorities is excellently adapted for books on history, and has been employed by most of our recent and eminent writers in that department of knowledge, but such a course has special disadvantages in theology. In this science too great exactness cannot be insisted upon

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when quoting the opinions of others, as exception might otherwise often be taken to the manner in which these had been expressed, and a charge of unfairness unjustly advanced which it might be inconvenient and difficult to disprove. Besides, many readers of theology like to have the words of ecclesiastical authorities placed before them for their future use; and although this can often be done in the form of notes, there are objections to this method as being calculated to distract the attention of the reader from the text of the book itself. It is hoped the foregoing reasons will amply excuse the author for the numerous extracts which he has given.

The majority of the quotations in this volume are taken direct from the works of the authors cited, or have been verified by a careful comparison with their writings. In a comparatively few instances this has not been possible, but it is believed, however, that all citations will bear the fullest investigation as regards representing the opinions of their original writers.

If the publication of this book produces no other effect than to induce a kindly toleration, on the part of those who still remain within the ranks of orthodoxy, towards those who recognize the paramount duty of thinking for themselves on matters of religion, instead of paying others to think for them, the object of the

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author will be abundantly answered, and he will feel amply rewarded in having contributed, in however slight a degree, to such a desirable and happy result.

ADELAIDE,

SOUTH AUSTRALIA,

December 13th, 1894.

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CHRIST, CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK I.

JESUS AN ESSENE.

The Jews, long before the time of Jesus, were divided into three sects, the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. It is almost impossible in reading of the last not to be forcibly struck with the remarkable resemblance between their doctrines, precepts and practices, and those of Jesus and the early Christians. Jesus is recorded to have frequently rebuked and denounced both the Sadducees and Pharisees, but it is not related that he once mentioned the Essenes by name. Yet we are informed by both Philo and Josephus that at the period in which John the Baptist and Jesus were born the Essenes were scattered over Palestine, and that they numbered about four thousand souls. It should be mentioned that peculiar importance is to be attached to the testimony of both Philo and Josephus respecting the mode of life pursued by the Essenes, as these authors were fully acquainted with it. They speak also with great respect and reverence of this sect, as surpassing all others in virtue. Josephus informs us that they led the same kind of life as the Pythagoreans in Greece, and that by their excellent virtue they were thought worthy even of divine revelations, while Philo says they were honoured with the appellation of Essenes because of their exceeding holiness.

As regards the word "Essene," we are informed that there is hardly an expression the etymology of which has

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called forth such a diversity of opinion as this name. The Greek and the Hebrew, the Syriac and the Chaldee names of persons and names of places, have successively been appealed to, to yield the etymology of this appellation, and to tell the reason why it has been given to this sect, and there are no less, if not more, than *nineteen* different explanations of it. The same authority just cited says that the term "Essene" was "coined" by Philo and Josephus for the benefit of the Greeks.[1]

The words Therapeuts and Essenes are convertible terms, and refer primarily to the art of healing which these devotees professed, as it was believed in those days that sanctity was closely allied to the exercise of this power, and that no cure of any sort could be imputed simply to natural causes. Additional value belongs to the records of these two historians, because they describe the life of the Essenes *as it was in the time of Jesus.* Philo was about sixty-two years old when the Great Teacher commenced his short but important career, and he survived the latter between ten and fifteen years, the exact period of his death being unknown. He lived chiefly at Alexandria, though he mentions having once visited Jerusalem. He does not appear to have met Jesus, for, being an ardent admirer of virtue himself, he would probably in that case have left us some record of his excellencies and sufferings. If he did hear of him, he may possibly have regarded him simply as a peculiarly enthusiastic member of that sect which he has described so minutely. Josephus was contemporary with Philo, but lived to a somewhat later period. There is a reference to the Jesus of Scripture in the pages of this historian, but it is considered by many

[1] Christian D. Ginsburg, in Kitto's "Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature."

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to have been interpolated and fathered upon this Jewish writer by some early Christian copyist. The passage stands thus :—"Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works,—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, but he appeared to them again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named after him, are not extinct at this day."[1]

Renan says of the foregoing allusion to Jesus, "I believe the passage respecting Jesus to be authentic. It is perfectly in the style of Josephus, and if this historian has made mention of Jesus, it is thus that he must have spoken of him. We feel only that a Christian hand has retouched the passage, has added a few words, without which it would almost have been blasphemous,[2] has perhaps retrenched or modified some expressions. It must be recollected that the literary fortune of Josephus was made by the Christians, who adopted his writings as essential documents to their sacred history. They made, probably in the second century, an edition according to Christian ideas."[3] Another French writer of distinction says, "No one in our day maintains any longer the entire authenticity of the chapter which Josephus devotes to

[1] "Antiquities of the Jews." Book xviii., chapter 3.

[2] "If it be lawful to call him a man." [3] "Life of Jesus."

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Christ in his Antiquities."[1] Opinions will probably ever differ respecting the celebrated passage last cited from Josephus. Thus the Rev. Dr. Giles says, "Those who are best acquainted with the character of Josephus and the style of his writings, have no hesitation in condemning this passage as a *forgery;* interpolated in the text, during the third century, by some pious Christian, who was scandalized that so famous a writer as Josephus should have taken no notice of the Gospels or of Christ, their subject." Concerning the same passage, a still more eminent authority says, "The passage concerning Jesus Christ was inserted into the text of Josephus between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius, and may furnish us with an example of a vulgar forgery."[2] Dr. N. Lardner was also evidently of opinion that the passage referred to above, in Josephus, was a forgery. He says, "Who was the first author of this interpolation cannot be said. Tanaquil Faber suspected Eusebius. I do not charge it upon him; but I think it was first made about his time, for, if I am not mistaken, we have seen sufficient reason to believe that this paragraph was not quoted by Origen, nor by any ancient Christian writer before Eusebius, that we have any knowledge of."[3]

Admitting there is anything genuine in the allusion in Josephus to Jesus, we can feel little surprise at the slightness of the notice he takes of him, for it is the style of this historian not to dwell too long upon the characters of those he describes. He makes hardly more than a passing reference to John the Baptist, whom he

[1] M. de Pressensé in his "Jesus Christ, his times, Life and Work."

[2] Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Chapter 6.

[3] "The Credibility of the Gospel History." Vol. iii., p. 542. Edition of 1815.

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terms "a good man."[1] But it is worthy of observation that Josephus does not select either Jesus, in the doubtful passage we have quoted, or the Baptist, as worthy of special commendation; he speaks of other men in the same way. Thus, he tells us of one named Manahem, belonging to the sect of the Essenes, who lived in the time of Herod the Great, before the temple was rebuilt, that "had this testimony, that he not only conducted his life after an excellent manner, but had the foreknowledge of future events given him by God also," and he assures us that Herod had the Essenes in such high estimation as to think "higher of them than their mortal state required."[2] In another place he refers to a distinguished member of the same sect called Simon, who, he informs us, interpreted a vision for Archelaus.[3] Most of what will be related of the Therapeuts or Essenes may be found either in Philo or Josephus; but as a constant reference to their works would be inconvenient, we beg to refer the reader, as the sources whence we have chiefly selected our information respecting these interesting people, to the works mentioned below.[4]

In almost all ages and countries there have been men anxious to withdraw themselves from the violence and strife which often disturb the quietude of our brief existence. In India the Gymnosophists were persons of this description, in Greece the Pythagoreans, in Egypt the Therapeuts, and in Syria the Essenes. As the Jews had long been settled in Alexandria, the two last named

[1] Antiqui. Book xviii., chapter 5.

[2] Antiqui. Book xv., chapter 10. [3] Antiqui. Book xvii., chapter 13.

[4] The treatise of Philo Judæus entitled, "To prove that every man who is virtuous is also free"; his treatise "On a contemplative life," and the "Fragments" in the eighth book of the same author. Also "The Antiquities of the Jews," by Josephus, Book xv., chapter 15, and his "Wars of the Jews," Book ii., chapter 8.

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sects are regarded by many persons as the same under different designations. At all events, as they held similar doctrines, taught the same precepts, and followed the same practices, we shall speak of them without distinction. Mosheim tells us that he agrees "entirely with those who regard the Therapeuts as being Jews,"[1] although he does not consider it absolutely certain that they were identical with the Essenes. M. de Pressensé in his work also expresses it as his opinion that "the sect of the Essenes forms the link between the Judaism of Palestine and that of Alexandria."[2] Another writer informs us that the Essenes of Egypt were divided into two sects: the practical Essenes, whose mode of life was the same as those of Palestine; and the contemplative Essenes, who were called Therapeuts.[3] Strauss informs us that the Essenes of Palestine, notwithstanding their social life being in accordance with the rules of their order, were especially adapted to spread their religious principles beyond the exclusive circle of their society, in consequence of occupying themselves with agriculture and peaceful trades. He also accounts for the similarity which is observable between the Pythagoreans and the Essenes by the fact that the members of the latter sect among the Egyptian Jews, under the name of Therapeuts, necessarily came in contact with the mental tendency which distinguished the Grecian sect. By this means he considers it possible that the peculiar doctrines of the Pythagoreans may have found their way into Judea, unless, he says, "we prefer to suppose that already in the time of the amalgamation, the education and

[1] Ecclesiastical History, First Century.

[2] "Jesus Christ, his Times, Life, and Work."

[3] See note in Pliny's "Natural History." Book v., chapter 16. Bohn's Edition.

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cultivation which took place under the Seleucidæ, the Pythagorean system found an echo in Palestine, this tendency being only strengthened and further developed by subsequent contact with the Egyptian Therapeuts."[1]

It is quite certain that before the time of Jesus the Therapeuts were known in Egypt. Great numbers of them lived in the neighbourhood of the Mareotic Lake. This inland water is now known as Mareotis or Marioût. It is situated in the N.-W. of Lower Egypt, and is separated from the Mediterranean on the west by the long and narrow belt of land on which Alexandria is built. It is about twenty-eight miles long and twenty broad, and in the early times of which we write was sufficiently deep for navigation. The overflowings of the Nile kept it constantly full. It was fitly chosen by the pious hermits we are describing as their home. It was a place remote from turmoil, was surrounded by beautiful gardens and vineyards, and was especially pleasant on account of the salubrity and mildness of its climate. The breezes from the lake and sea contributed to their enjoyment, and the occupations in which they were engaged were such as to promote their health and conduce to their longevity. The dwellings in which the recluses lived were not placed near to each other, for it was regarded as inconsistent that men who had retired from the world should dwell too closely together. On the other hand, they were sufficiently adjacent for communications to pass easily between the several habitations, so that help could be had in seasons of difficulty or of danger. Most of the Therapeuts were men who had abandoned their property, giving it away as an encumbrance to their pursuit of peace and rest, and there

[1] "A New Life of Jesus."

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were few among them who had not, in addition to the renunciation of wealth, also abandoned brethren, wives, and often numerous families. In disposing of their means, when considered superfluous to themselves, it might have been thought they would, at all events, have bestowed what the greater part of the world considers desirable upon their immediate relations and friends. But these men, who renounced wealth themselves, would not give it to those whom they had most occasion to love, but in the instances where they did not destroy it, as by cutting down their trees and allowing cattle to devour their estates, gave it to the utterly poor. Josephus says distinctly of the Essenes that they were permitted of their own accord to afford succour to such as deserved it, or to those in distress; but they could not bestow anything on their kindred without the consent of the curators, that is, of the persons who had charge of the common property.

The foregoing remarks find illustration in more than one part of the New Testament. Thus Jesus called upon his disciples to leave all and follow him; and so Peter is recorded to have once said, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee."[1] And Jesus himself frequently encouraged this utter renunciation of all worldly ties by the promise of great future happiness. "Verily," he said, "there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."[2] Levi, the publican, afterwards Matthew, is recorded to have "left

[1] Mark x. 28. [2] Mark x. 29, 30.

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all" at the bidding of Jesus. At his word, he rose up and followed him.[1]

As the language of Jesus, which promised an increase of goods and relatives on earth to those who would forsake those they already had, cannot be understood literally, we must regard it as having reference to that universal spirit of brotherhood which existed among the Essenes, and which required them, under all circumstances, to help each other. Philo says, speaking distinctly of the Essenes, "If any of them is sick, he is cured from the common resources, being attended to by the general care and anxiety of the whole body. Accordingly, the old men, even if they happen to be childless, as if they were not only the fathers of many children, but were even also particularly happy in an affectionate offspring, are accustomed to end their lives in a most happy and prosperous and carefully attended old age, being looked upon by such a number of people as worthy of so much honour and provident regard, that they think themselves bound to care for them even more from inclination than from any tie of natural affection."

If we did not know otherwise, we might think the following a sequel to the above description given us by Philo of the communistic society in which the Essenes lived. It is certainly highly suggestive that they and the early Christians were the same. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessed of lands or

[1] Luke v. 28.

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houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses . . . having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.[1]

The Essenes, as we have seen, were scattered all over Judea, and a warm-hearted missionary of this sect might well gain disciples to the cause. A word would often be sufficient to a prepared mind, and confirm in it the resolution which was perhaps already half-formed. Thus, after Jesus had for some time preached repentance, he had only to say to Peter and Andrew, when he saw them fishing, "Follow me," to induce them instantly to act on his invitation. Nay, the same day, when he called James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, "they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him."[2]

A partial renunciation of property, conjoined with the most scrupulous conduct, was not a sufficient claim for the privilege of discipleship with Jesus; *all* must be abandoned, or the sacrifice was insufficient. Thus, when a young man of irreproachable behaviour asked Jesus what "good thing" he should do to obtain eternal life, he was told to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. When this was done, he was told, treasure in heaven would be his, and he could then follow Jesus.[3] The conditions were too severe, he went away sorrowful; for we are told he had great possessions. It was on this occasion that Jesus said to his disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle,

[1] Acts iv. 32-37. [2] Matthew iv. 18-22.
[3] Matthew xix. 21.

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than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."[1] In the same spirit Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven "unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."[2] Again, he tells us, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."[3]

So thoroughly was the idea of wealth associated with wickedness and future misery, and that of poverty with virtue and eternal happiness, that we find the most important utterances of Jesus pregnant with this teaching. The rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who fared sumptuously every day, was his conception of one whose future lot it was to be in hell, lifting up his eyes in torment, because in this world he had received his "good things"; while virtue, and its ultimate reward, were typified in the beggar, lying at the rich man's gate, full of sores, and so utterly abandoned by man, that the only relief he obtained was from the dogs which licked his ulcerous limbs. The poor abandoned wretch was rather to be envied than the rich man. Although nothing evil is related of the latter, it was his misfortune to be wealthy here. Though nothing excellent is related of Lazarus, it was his inexpressibly good fortune to be poor on earth; for having there received "evil things," it was his destiny hereafter to be for ever "comforted."[4] Well might Jesus say, "Blessed be ye poor," if for this, and this

[1] Matthew xix. 24. Mark x. 21, 22. Luke xviii. 22, 23, 24.
[2] Matthew xiii. 44. [3] Matthew xiii. 45, 46.
[4] Luke xvi. 19-25.

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alone, theirs was the "kingdom of God."[1] And with equal force might he denounce the wealthy, and say, "Woe unto you that are rich! for you have received your consolation,"[2] if this present comfort and ease were to comprehend all they might ever hope to receive from the hands of Him who is equally the God and Father of the rich and the poor, and who, not they, determines, beyond any one's control, the destiny of every child of man, and the bounds of his habitation.

A certain class of clergymen sometimes affect a style of exposition which not unfrequently appears somewhat like a parody on the recorded words of Jesus, but which fail to command that respect and consideration from those to whom it is addressed, which early training has taught us to pay even to those sayings of his which appear upon reflection both harsh and unreasonable. The consequence is, that ministers throw themselves open to a *tu quoque* retort. Thus, Dr. Trench expresses the opinion, in his "Notes on the Parables," that "the course of an unbroken prosperity is ever a sign and augury of ultimate reprobation." A reviewer remarks on the atrocious sentiment as follows:—"Doubtless the heart knows its own bitterness, and there may be many breaks in a life of outward uninterrupted success; but Dr. Trench's axiom might afford a grim satisfaction to those who, in the midst of want and wretchedness, regard the rich and the powerful as unquestionably in the enjoyment of 'unbroken prosperity.' There are probably those who may think that this dangerous condition is fulfilled in Dr. Trench himself."[3]

A writer, commenting on the question of the disciples,

[1] Luke vi. 20. [2] Luke vi. 24, *see also* James v. 1.

[3] *National Review*, January, 1863.

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when they heard Jesus say it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, and which so amazed them, that they exclaimed, "Who, then, can be saved?" says, "Truly we can re-echo the question, since every day shows this to be totally contrary to experience; for the world contains men of the greatest wealth, and of the strictest morality and piety. But Jesus," he goes on to say, "was no political economist; and all his views were absorbed in the ideas—a community of property and the approach of the end of the world—which the Essenians so strictly carried out."[1]

The rewards promised by Jesus to the good, and the prospect of suffering which he held out to the evil, correspond very closely with the ideas which the best of the Jewish sects are stated to have believed. They taught that good souls have their habitation beyond the ocean in a region that is neither oppressed with storms of rain or snow, nor with intense heat; but that this place is such as is refreshed by the gentle breathing of a west wind, that is perpetually blowing from the ocean; while they allotted to bad souls a dark and tempestuous den, full of never-ceasing punishments. So Jesus taught that the wicked shall "go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."[2] The ultimately rejected are to be cast into "outer darkness," where "weeping and gnashing of teeth"[3] will be the only sounds ever heard amidst the awful profundity of the gloom. The finally-accepted, the early Christians joyfully believed, will dwell in a city that shall have no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it,[4]

[1] "A Voice from the Ganges," p. 56.
[2] Matthew xxv. 46.
[3] Matthew viii. 12.
[4] Revelation xxi. 23.

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because the Lord God giveth them light,[1] while softest music shall swell and fall from celestial harps,[2] a new song shall ever be sung,[3] and odours of heavenly fragrance shall be unceasingly poured from golden vials.[4]

"These men," says Josephus, speaking of the Essenes, "are despisers of riches, and so very communicative as raises our admiration." We might almost think he is praising those whom Jesus taught in these words, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."[5] We will still quote the historian last cited, as his description so exactly tallies with the precepts of Jesus and the customs of his followers. Thus he continues to write:—"Nor is there any one to be found among them who hath more than another; for it is a law among them, that those who come to them must let what they have be common to the whole order, insomuch, that among them all there is no appearance of poverty or excess of riches, but every one's possessions are intermingled with every other's possessions; and so there is, as it were, one patrimony among all the brethren." So it was with Jesus and the disciples, they all had one purse. When food was required, the disciples went singly or together to purchase it.[6]

Among this admirable sect, stewards were appointed to take care of their secular affairs, that every member might not be occupied in worldly matters. So we learn that even among the disciples in the time of Jesus one was appointed to carry the bag containing the common property,[7] and that afterwards, in the first organized body of believers, "seven men of honest report" were

[1] Revelation xxii. 5. [2] Revelation v. 8. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. Matthew v. 42. [6] John iv. 8, and xiii. 29. [7] John xii. 6, and xiii. 29.

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selected by the rest to see justice done to the wants of all, both Jews and Gentiles, in "the daily ministration."[1]

Those who desired to be enrolled among the Essenes, were made partakers of "the waters of purification,"[2] and we find that even Jesus did not disdain to be baptized by John.[3] We are informed that the baptism of John was for "the remission of sins,"[4] and it is well known with what importance this ceremony, sanctioned by Jesus, was afterwards invested, as a token of affiliation in the Church which he was said to have established.

The similarity between the right of initiation practised by the Essenes, and that adopted by Christians, is certainly too striking not to be suggestive of the idea that they had a common origin. "No question," says Dean Milman, "has been more strenuously debated than the origin of the rite of baptism. The practice of the external washing of the body, as emblematic of the inward purification of the soul, is almost universal. The sacred Ganges cleanses all moral pollution from the Indian; among the Greeks and Romans even the murderer might, it was supposed, wash the blood 'clean from his hands'; and in many of their religious rites, lustrations or ablutions, either in the running stream or in the sea, purified the candidate for divine favour, and made him fit to approach the shrines of the gods. The perpetual similitude and connection between the uncleanliness of the body and of the soul, which ran through the Mosaic Law, and have been interwoven with the common language and sentiments, the formal enactment of washing in many cases, which required the cleansing of some

[1] Acts vi. 1-3.
[2] Josephus.
[3] Matthew iii. 15.
[4] Mark i. 4.

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unhealthy taint, or more than usual purity, must have familiarized the mind with the mysterious effect attributed to such a rite; and of all the Jewish sects, that of the Essenes, to which no doubt popular opinion associated the Baptists, were most frequent and scrupulous in their ceremonial ablutions."[1]

Dean Stanley remarks that "the plunge into the bath of purification, long known among the Jewish nation as the symbol of a change of life, had been revived with a fresh energy by the Essenes, and it received a definite signification and impulse from the austere Prophet who derived his name from the ordinance." He elsewhere remarks, "With the Essenes, among whom baptism originated, we may almost say that it was godliness."[2] "Cleanliness next to godliness," was a maxim of John Wesley..

Among the Jews, from a very early period, two modes of interpreting scripture existed, the literal and the allegorical or spiritual. Josephus, in his preface to his "Antiquities of the Jews," says that Moses wrote "some things wisely, but enigmatically, and others under a decent allegory." Special education and training were required to apply in an acceptable and appropriate manner these two methods, according to the recognised rules of the three Jewish sects: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. Jewish writers tell us that those who study the Pentateuch attentively cannot fail to perceive traces in it of an Oral Law. They refer us for example to Deuteronomy i. 1, where it is said, "On this side of Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain the Law." In Deuteronomy xii. 21 we read as follows: "If the

[1] Milman's "History of Early Christianity." Vol. i., p. 135.

[2] "Christian Institutions."

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place where the Lord thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the Lord hath given thee, as I have commanded thee." There is no *written* command of Moses relating to the circumstance above supposed. Again, we read in Deuteronomy xvii. 8-11, "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, ... and thou shalt come unto the Levites, and the Judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment: and thou shalt do according to the sentence, ... and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: according to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left."

It is affirmed that the very nature of the Mosaic Law required from the beginning of its promulgation an *oral* explanation, or it would not have been understood at all. The first precept given in Egypt was one relating to the sanctification of the *first* month of the year, yet no mention is made anywhere of a calendar. Work was prohibited on the Sabbath, but it was not stated distinctly what *was* work and what *not*. Then the law of inheritance is confined to four verses in Numbers xxviii. 8-11. These in practice required a multitude of regulations, which are now to be found in a large volume of the Talmud. Even Jesus is represented as acknowledging the authority of the rulers of his day, saying, "The

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scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do."[1]

Notwithstanding the respect which Jesus is related to have paid to the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees, he is said to have seriously upbraided them with concealing truths from their listeners relating to the kingdom of heaven, shutting it up against men, not entering in themselves, nor yet suffering others to enter in.[2] But the lawyers, scribes, and Pharisees were not peculiar in their concealment of recondite verities from the people, the Essenes were also distinguished for a similar practice. One of the promises required from every proselyte who joined the Essenes was that he would neither conceal anything from those of his own sect, nor discover any of their doctrines to others, not though any one should compel him to do so at the hazard of his life. It is certainly strange, and more than strange, that though Jesus is represented as denouncing the lawyers for withholding from the people "the key of knowledge,"[3] it is recorded that he himself did the very same thing. Thus, we are informed that when "much people," in fact, "great multitudes," were come to him out of every city to hear him preach, that he purposely spoke to them in parables, that seeing they might not perceive, and hearing they might not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and be healed *by him*,[4] while he said to his disciples that unto them it was given, by his after explanations, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.[5] We are even told by two of the

[1] Matthew xxiii. 2, 3. [2] Matthew xxiii. 13. [3] Luke xi. 52.
[4] Matthew xiii. 15, and Luke v. 10. [5] Matthew xiii. 11.

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evangelists that Jesus *never* spoke unto the multitudes except in parables.[1]

The unwillingness of Jesus, the Great Teacher as he is so often called, to enlighten the people at large as to the truths so important for them to know, and which, if accepted by them, would have led to their conversion, by his own admission, and to their being healed by him, is quite inexplicable unless we regard Jesus simply as a member of a secret society or sect, like that of the Essenes. We perceive what extreme care he took not to enlighten them as to the meaning of his words. How strange such conduct appears in this Being, whom we are informed is the Saviour of all mankind, and who was called JESUS expressly because he was to "save his people from their sins!"[2] Are we really to believe that even in his own life-time this long-promised Emmanuel, this God-Man, purposely, of set intention, acted as described, and for the reason stated, viz. that those who so gladly listened to him, should, nevertheless, not be converted by his inspired teachings? If so, we have one more, added to the vast number of those insuperable difficulties which many experience, and which prevents their accepting, in their integrity, the Gospel narratives of the life of Jesus. The special difficulty associated with the preaching of the son of Joseph disappears in a great degree, if we regard him simply as an Essene.

A modern missionary of Christianity who should act on the same principle towards those to whom he is sent, as Jesus is said to have done when he uttered obscure and incomprehensible parables to his own countrymen expressly that they might not comprehend them, would be considered very inconsistent, as not truly recognizing

[1] Matthew xiii. 34, and Mark iv. 34. [2] Matthew i. 21.

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the importance of his high calling, and as very unlikely to succeed in his errand. Nor would he probably be more successful than was Jesus in making numerous, convinced, and permanent converts to his cause. The evidence given to us in the Gospels certainly appears to indicate that Jesus himself had no conception of the future and extensive adoption of that creed which should in after ages be known as Christianity. His conduct was that of a sectary and not that of the Founder of a Religion meant for all mankind.

Obedience to those in authority was a fundamental maxim with the Essenes, because, as Josephus informs us, they believed no one obtains the government without God's assistance. This idea corresponds with the narrative which relates the unwillingness of Jesus to offend the secular power when collecting tribute money;[1] and with his precepts to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's;"[2] and also with the apostolic assurance that "the powers that be are ordained of God."[3] An Essene was, in fact, to show fidelity to all men, but specially to those in authority. "No one," says Philo, "not even immoderately cruel tyrants, nor of the more treacherous and hypocritical oppressors, was ever able to bring any real accusation against the multitude of those called Essenes or Holy." Such being the case, we need hardly wonder to find it is recorded that Pilate said to the chief priests and the people concerning Jesus, "I find no fault in this man."[4]

There are some who would infer the divinity of Jesus by assuming that no record exists of shortcomings or sinfulness on his part. And they tell us he "uniformly

[1] Matthew xvii. 27.
[2] Matthew xxii. 21.
[3] Romans xiii. 1.
[4] Luke ii. 3, 4.

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expressed a distinct sense of faultlessness and perfection. He never once reproached himself or regretted anything he had done or said. He never uttered a word to indicate that he had even taken a wrong step, or neglected a single opportunity, or that anything could have been done or said more or better than he had done or said."[1] We see, however, from the above testimony that there were hundreds of men in the time of Jesus against whom their bitterest enemies were never "able to bring any real accusation." We must not forget either, whatever our prepossessions are, that the life of Jesus was written by those who admired and loved him; and that all the documents we have respecting him are but traditional; we can never positively know how he really lived, what words he actually spoke!

Though the writer last quoted assures us Jesus uniformly expressed a distinct sense of faultlessness and perfection, we are not, therefore, ourselves rendered incapable of discerning what appear blemishes in his character, as this is delineated in the Gospels; or, at least, of noticing that his conduct was sometimes not in accordance with his own precepts. These latter deprecated revilings, yet he reviled. They forbade striking, yet he struck. These inconsistencies have been apparent to thousands of intelligent readers, who have often been shocked and grieved by them; nay, their faith itself has often been disturbed by the reflections they suggest. One author says, "In the Gospels we have the picture of one who, on many occasions, used his tongue in the very way which St. Peter and St. James both con-

[1] "The Christ of History," by John Young, M.A.

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demned. St. Peter described our Lord as one who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we find reports of sayings of Jesus full of revilings—revilings so hard and cruel, that Christians could not follow the example of using such language without forfeiting their Christian character. In St. John, Jesus is represented as wrangling in a very undignified manner with his opponents, and actually calling them the children of the devil. Now, I prefer to accept St. Peter's account of our Lord; but, if I do so, I must give up the others. Both accounts cannot be equally true."[1]

That Jesus did not always *attract* those who came to him can hardly be denied. This fact is even admitted by that eminent Churchman, Cardinal Newman, whom we should naturally expect to be exceedingly careful in a concession on this subject. Thus, Charles Kingsley writes, "I was frightened at a sermon of Newman's on 'Christian Reverence,' in which he tries to show that Christ used to 'deter' people and *repel* them. He illustrates it by the case of the young ruler, and says that he was severe on Nicodemus, and that 'he made himself strange and spake roughly' to those who inquired. This," adds the author whom we are quoting, "is very dark and dismal;"[2] which he may truly say, if we are to regard Jesus as the Redeemer of all mankind, in every age and in every country, without respect of persons.

[1] Sermon by the Rev. Charles Voysey. *See also* Appendix No. 11 of his "Defence," delivered on December 1st, 1869, before the Chancery Court of York.

[2] "Charles Kingsley," edited by his wife, p. 29.

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The behaviour and language of Jesus to the woman of Canaan [1] is in striking opposition to this conception.

Dr. Temple, Bishop of London, seems to admit the impossibility of perceiving a divine element in all the events of the life of Jesus, for he tells us that "had his revelation been delayed *till now,* assuredly it would have been hard for us to recognize the Divinity; for the faculty of Faith has turned inwards, and cannot now accept any outer manifestations of the truth of God. Our vision of the Son of God is now aided by the eyes of the Apostles, and by that aid we can recognize the Express Image of the Father. But in this we are like men who are led through unknown woods by Indian guides. We recognize the indications by which the path was known, as soon as those indications are pointed out; but we feel that it would have been quite vain for us to look for them unaided." [2] The foregoing is a very remarkable admission. It brings forcibly to recollection the opinion of those most intimate with the *private* life of Jesus. In the very chapter that records the appointment of twelve disciples to the apostleship, we read that the immediate friends (in the margin, *kmomen*) of Jesus, so far from perceiving "the Divinity" of him they knew so well, were persuaded that he was "beside himself," and they even went so far as to go out with the, no doubt, kindly intention "to lay hold upon him." [3] This unbelief of those most intimate with Jesus must have made a lasting impression on many minds, and have been considered in those apostolic days as highly significant, for in the Gospel of John, written very many years after the death of Jesus, we are told that about the period when the apostles were chosen "many of his

[1] Matthew xv. 22-26. [2] "Essays and Reviews." [3] Mark iii. 21.

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disciples went back, and walked no more with him," and that "neither did his brethren believe in him."[1] These statements confirm the opinion of Dr. Temple that a personal knowledge of Jesus would not probably have assisted us "to recognize" his divine nature.

There is little doubt but that the delineation of the character of Jesus as gentle and sympathetic in the extreme, full of yearning to long-suffering humanity, particularly towards the poor and unhappy among his own countrymen and women, over whom he so deeply mourned when he exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not," has tended greatly towards his recognition by so many as God-Man. Dean Stanley justly remarks that "when Bishop Pearson in his work of the Creed vindicates the Divinity of Christ without the slightest mention of those moral qualities by which he has bowed down the world before him, his grasp on the doctrine is far feebler than that of Rousseau or Mill, who have seized the very attributes which constitute the marrow and essence of his nature."[2]

It is certain, however, that the Gospels present us with a two-fold aspect of the character of Jesus. A careful student of the evangelistic records remarks, "That whatever there is of simplicity, tenderness, or encouragement in his discourses is reserved for his disciples, and spoken to all alike. The hard sayings are uttered in the presence of the public, almost, as it would seem, to destroy the impression that his miracles are reported to have produced. It is, in fact, difficult to form any other conclusion from the fourth Gospel than that Jesus, of set

[1] John vii. 5.

[2] "Christian Institutions."

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purpose, repelled the Jews lest they should believe in him."[1] This writer is evidently of the same opinion as Cardinal Newman, already referred to by Kingsley, and who appears to conclude from the particulars we have of Jesus in the Gospels that he "used to 'deter' people and 'repel' them."

The evangelists differ greatly in their histories of the life of Jesus. One orthodox writer tells us that "Very numerous attempts have been made to construct harmonies of the four Gospels. One plan is to form out of the whole, in what is supposed to be the true chronological order, a continuous narrative, embracing all the matter of the four, but without repetitions of the same or similar words. Another plan is to exhibit in chronological order, the entire text of the four Gospels arrayed in parallel columns so far as two or more of them cover the same ground. The idea is very imposing, but the realization of it is beset with formidable if not insurmountable difficulties. It is certain that the evangelists do not always follow the exact order of time, and it is sometimes impossible to decide between the different arrangements of events in their record. In the four narratives of the events connected with the resurrection all harmonists find themselves baffled."[2]

A more recent authority on this subject, who tells us in the commencement of his "Life of Christ" that the Gospels "are always truthful, bearing on every page that simplicity which is the stamp of honest narrative;"[3]

[1] "The Jesus of History," by Sir R. D. Hanson, late Chief Justice of South Australia.

[2] "A New Introduction to the Study of the Bible," by E. P. Barrow, D.D.

[3] Farrar's "Popular Life of Christ." Chapter 5.

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afterwards, in answer to the inquiry, "Is it or is it not possible to construct a harmony of the Gospels which shall remove all difficulties created by the differing order in which the evangelists narrate the same events, and by the confessedly fragmentary character of their records," replies as follows:—"It is, perhaps, a sufficient answer to this question that scarcely any two authorities agree in the schemes which have been elaborated for the purpose. A host of writers, in all Christian nations, have devoted years—some of them have devoted well-nigh whole lives—to the consideration of this and similar questions, and have yet failed to come to any agreement or to command any general consent. An indisputable or convincing harmony of the Gospels appears to me impossible. To enter into all the arguments on this subject would be to undertake a task which would fill volumes and yet produce no final settlement of the difficulty."[1] There have actually been about two hundred different harmonies of the four Gospels published since the Reformation, the whole of which have failed to reconcile the discordant elements and details of these histories.

The necessary consequence, the inevitable result of conflicting evidence as to any event, whether related in secular or sacred history, is to weaken the testimony, and it may be so divergent as to be absolutely valueless. The impossibility of forming a harmony of the Gospels in relation to the reputed birth, deeds, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, which subsequent events have invested with the highest interest to our race, is a proof to thinking minds that the acceptance or rejection of his biography as related in them is not of that para-

[1] Farrar's "Life of Christ," p. 102 (popular edition).

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mount importance as regards the eternal destinies of mankind as theologians would make us believe. He, who, we are told, so controlled all things from the beginning of the world as to make them culminate in the life of Jesus, would never certainly, as the final result, have caused the evidences of it to be so dubious as to render nugatory his vast and beneficial design for man's well-being; or leave the records of it such as to cause doubts of every degree in the minds of men in every age, whose longing for the truth has been of the most ardent and sincere nature. The whole case is, indeed, put very mildly by the writer, who says, "When the question is in agitation, whether an alleged fact be true, or not, our conviction of the truth of it will certainly be affected by the concurrence or contradiction of the testimonies in its favour. And if the contradictions are such as to be wholly incapable of a reconciliation, the proof of the fact will certainly not be so satisfactory, as it would be, if the witnesses agreed."[1] A more recent and an esteemed author affirms, when referring to the Bible, that "In a divine book everything must be true, and as two contradictions cannot both be true, it must not contain any contradiction."[2] In all estimates of the life of Jesus we should never forget that we only possess very imperfect and often contradictory accounts of from two to four years of it, leaving about twenty-six years of varied incidents connected with his earthly sojourn totally unrecorded. Were we supplied with authentic information concerning his whole career, how different might be our opinion of him as a man, and how fully might we feel the difficulty which the Bishop of London

[1] See notes to Vol. iii., chapter 2, section 1, of Michaelis's "Introduction to the New Testament," translated by Bishop Marsh. [2] Renan.

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says we should experience, had his revelation been delayed "till now," of recognizing his divinity! As it is, we are not, and unfortunately never shall be, in a position to form a truthful opinion of the history of Jesus. We can only glean, from the meagre descriptions of him which have descended to us through interested sources, some faint ideas respecting his opinions, his creed and his acts. These, in many instances, assimilate, we believe, to those which are read of, as distinguishing the Essenes. One thing is certain, that the Jesus of Christians is not what Jesus was, but what they conceive he ought to have been. Their conception of him is far more ideal than real.

"Among those men," says Philo, once more speaking of the Essenes, "you will find no makers of arrows, or javelins, or swords, or helmets, or breastplates, or shields; no makers of arms or of military engines; no one, in short, attending to any employment whatever connected with war, or even to any of those occupations even in peace which are easily perverted to wicked purposes; for they are utterly ignorant of all traffic, and of all commercial dealings, and of all navigation, but they repudiate and keep from everything which can possibly afford any inducement to covetousness." Much of the foregoing description would apply to the disciples whom Jesus gathered around him. Contention and strife were evidently discountenanced among them, there was nothing warlike in their ways, and we can readily believe they would have been averse to the manufacture of martial or of deadly weapons. Nay, Jesus himself is reported to have said "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."[1]

[1] Matthew xxvi. 52.

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Commerce could hardly have existed among those who were required to give to the asker and lend without interest to the borrower, and who were forbidden to accumulate treasure. "Lay not up for yourselves," said Jesus to his disciples, "treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."[1] These sentiments attributed to Jesus, a recent author remarks, "are, in reality, the sentiments of the poor Essenian Jews, who placed the sum of human virtue in passive meekness and rigid self-denial, in poverty, bodily and mental suffering, and a total dereliction of all worldly concerns. The essence of religion they believed to consist in peace, quietness and tranquility; and they were so negligent of all earthly affairs, that if the world had been peopled with Essenians, it would soon have come to an end."[2]

The utmost equality obtained among the followers of Jesus. "All ye are brethren,"[3] said this teacher to his disciples. He claimed for himself alone the title of Master,[4] but this term seems to have been chiefly used to indicate that they were to learn from him lessons of humility and lowliness, for he said, "he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."[5] Acting on this principle he even washed, we are told, his disciples' feet. In like manner, Philo informs us that in the sacred feast of the Therapeuts, young men were selected from the other members with all possible care, on account of their excellence, to wait on the rest as servants, not on compulsion, nor in obedience to imperious commands, but as "acting as virtuous and well-born youths ought to act who are eager to attain to the perfection of virtue."

[1] Matthew vi. 19. [2] "A voice from the Ganges."
[3] Matthew xxiii. 8. [4] Matthew xxiii. 8. [5] Matthew xxiii. 11.

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The conquest of the passions was a primary doctrine among the Essenes. So Jesus makes the rash display of anger a deadly sin, which placed man in the greatest imminence, and the utterances of hasty revilings as putting him in danger of hell-fire.[1]

The Essenes considered pleasures an evil, and this opinion was enforced by Jesus in the parable of the sower who went forth to sow. The seed which fell among thorns, we are told by him, are "they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."[2]

Remarking on this parable, a recent writer observes that "The rude, slovenly, careless agriculture which Jesus has depicted in the Parable of the Sower very correctly typifies the character of his own teaching. There is no tillage described, no ploughing and preparation of the soil, and careful harrowing in of the seed; neither is there any watering, hoeing, and weeding to strengthen the young plant and insure its satisfactory growth. The husbandman goes forth and scatters the seed before him indifferently, as a blind man might do, no matter where or how it falls, and imagines that his work is fitly accomplished. But see the result: much that he flings carelessly abroad settles in wild and stony places, where it cannot possibly germinate, and some perishes for want of sustenance or is carried off by birds, and only a comparatively small portion strikes root in a good soil, so as to be eventually productive. Correspondingly poor issues would be sure to come from his own irregular wayside discourses—wandering from place

[1] Matthew v. 22. [2] Luke viii. 14.

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to place, and imparting to groups of rude, unprepared minds instruction without education."[1]

The Essenes, again, were particularly averse to oaths on ordinary occasions; whatever they said was strictly to be credited. Swearing in order to be believed they regarded as worse than perjury, for they affirmed that he who could not be trusted without swearing by God, was already condemned. So Jesus taught his followers. "Swear not at all;" he said, "neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King." All swearing, in fact, even by the "head," was prohibited, and whatever asseveration included more than "Yea, yea," or "Nay, nay," was said to be evil.[2]

When the Essenes partook of food together a priest always said grace before meat, and it was unlawful for any one to taste of the food before this was done. Jesus also, it is recorded, gave thanks on several occasions before distributing food,[3] and, in the affecting scene of the last supper, it is said that he took bread and blessed it,[4] or gave thanks,[5] previous to handing it to his disciples.

Josephus describes the Essenes as considering it a good thing to be clothed in white raiment, and he speaks of them as frequently using white veils; while Philo remarks of the Therapeuts, that, when they assembled on religious occasions, they came together clothed in white garments. And so we are informed that when Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James and John, "his raiment was white as the light."[6] Another writer

[1] "The Real Jesus," by John Vickers (1891). [2] Matthew v. 34-37.
[3] Matthew xiv. 19, and xv. 39. [4] Matthew xxvi. 26.
[5] Luke xxii. 19. [6] Matthew xvii. 2, and Luke ix. 29.

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says that on the same occasion it was white as snow; so as no fuller on earth could whiten them.[1] We read, also, that the raiment of the angel who rolled the stone from the door of the sepulchre was as "white as snow."[2] The angel spoken of in the Revelation of St. John promised a few in the church at Sardis that they should walk with him "in white,"[3] and he is represented as saying generally, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment."[4] In the same book the four and twenty elders who sat round the throne are described as "clothed in white raiment,"[5] and John, who beheld the Apocalyptic vision, says, "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Lamb, clothed with white robes."[6] In other parts of the book just quoted we shall find the same preference given to white garments and to white objects as that which the Essenes and Therapeuts are said to have manifested.[7]

In the early ages of Christianity the followers of Jesus still celebrated some of the Jewish ordinances, in particular that relating to the feast of Pentecost, so called from the Greek word *pentēkostē*, fiftieth day, kept up on the fiftieth day after the feast of the Passover, *see* Leviticus xxiii. 15; Deuteronomy xvi. 9; and Acts ii. 1. This was a favourite period among them for the observance of the rite of baptism, which was, as already pointed out, of Essenic origin. As emblematic of the spiritual purity which this ceremony is supposed to confer, those who received it were clothed *in white*, and

[1] Mark ix. 3. [2] Matthew xxviii. 3. [3] Revelation iii. 4.
[4] Revelation iii. 5. [5] Revelation iv. 4. [6] Revelation vii. 9.
[7] *See* Revelation vi. 2; vii. 13, 14; xv. 6; xix. 8, 11, 14; xx. 11.

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the Pentecostal day received the name of *White Sunday* (Dominica alba), still retained in the Christian Church under the name of Whit-sunday. It is the seventh Sunday after Easter, just before which the Jews still observe their Passover. Thus as this season or Whit-suntide, as it is called, yearly returns, the partiality of the Essenes and Therapeuts for white raiment recorded by their Jewish historians is brought appropriately to our recollection.

Though the Essenes were numerous in Judea, they had no hereditary or family connexions. They were recruited from without. This fact may account for the speech which Jesus is reported once to have uttered, and which has often been accounted unnatural and harsh, especially in one who was so gentle in his character. It is said that on one occasion a woman, carried away with her admiration of his teachings, exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb which bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." To which Jesus is reported to have replied, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."[1] We may also, in this manner, comprehend the singular mode in which he is once said to have accosted his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"[2] We are not told that this apparently rough manner offended his mother. On the contrary, she seems to have regarded it as quite in keeping with the mission upon which he had entered. He had renounced all family ties himself, or he would not have advised and required his disciples to do the same.

It is generally conceded that the Gospels nowhere indicate that at any period the mother of Jesus recognized his divinity. If any with whom he was intimate knew of

[1] Luke xi. 27, 28. [2] John ii. 4.

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it, she, of all others, should have been deeply conscious of it. As regards his father, Joseph, it is remarkable that after Jesus was twelve years old we have not a single reference to him in the four Evangelists. And yet Joseph was the head of a large family of sons and of daughters, of whom Jesus was the first-born. If Jesus at an early age joined the Essenes, as is highly probable, he may no longer have recognized Joseph as "father," any more than he chose to call Mary "mother," and may have repudiated any natural claim his progenitors had upon him. This seems not unlikely when we remember the harsh answer which he gave to a disciple whom he had commanded to follow him. This man's father had just died, and though anxious to follow Jesus, he very properly said, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." The reply he received was, "Let the dead bury their dead." Are we to presume from this that Jesus himself would have acted in a similar manner as he required of this disciple, and not have seen the fitness of paying the last filial rites to his own father, Joseph, in the event of the latter's decease? Such behaviour in any ordinary instance would surely call for reprobation, but in the case of an Essene might simply demonstrate beyond any doubt how thorough was that renunciation of mere natural obligations which they were required to make when they became initiated into the secrets and forms of this self-denying sect. There are few incidents connected with the life of Jesus that leave such a painful impression, when read, as the objection Jesus made to this disciple's doing what his natural instinct and love to his departed father dictated to him as his privilege and his duty. The history of the behaviour of the patriarch Joseph upon the death of his father Jacob

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(Genesis l. 1-7) is in striking contrast to the narrative we have commented upon, as well as to all Jewish funeral practices in similar instances.

The Essenes, in their renunciation of all worldly ties, may have borne in mind the example of the old Levites, who, in their entire devotion unto the service to which they were set apart, are thus referred to in the person of Levi, their ancestor: "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children." (Deuteronomy xxxiii. 9.)

Speaking of the Essenes, one of the historians we have mentioned says expressly that they were Jews by birth, and that they manifested a greater affection one to another than did members of the other sects. How many touching illustrations we could give of the fervent love which Jesus is said to have expressed towards his friends, of his exhortations to them to love each other, and himself, their teacher, in particular. He compares in one place the love which he bore to his disciples to that which his heavenly Father bore to him, saying, "As the Father hath loved me, *so* have I loved you."[1] He tells his followers that love to one another was to be their peculiar distinction. "By this," he said, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."[2] And he excites their affection to himself by solemnly declaring, that whosoever loved him should be loved by God himself, saying, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father."[3]

The very affection which the brotherhood we are speaking of felt towards each other, was strictly limited to the male sex. The Essenes, at least the

[1] John xv. 9. [2] John xiii. 35. [3] John xiv. 21.

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great bulk of them, did not marry, and they esteemed continence as the highest virtue. They did not deny the fitness of marriage in others, for the due preservation of the race, but they avoided it themselves, and, as a rule, all who joined them had to be single. Josephus, indeed, tells of one order of Essenes who agreed with the rest as to their way of living, and in their customs and laws, but differed from them on the point of matrimony, as thinking that by not marrying they cut off the principal part of human life, which is the prospect of succession; nay, rather, that if all men should be of the same opinion, the whole race of mankind would fail. But he adds further, "They do not use to accompany with their wives when they are with child, as a demonstration that they do not marry out of regard to pleasure, but for the sake of posterity." It appears highly probable that Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, belonged to this section of the Essenes; and we read expressly of the former, that when he was fully assured of offspring by his wife, that he "knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son."[1]

Archdeacon Farrar, in his beautifully written, poetical, but fallacious "Life of Christ," ignores the exceedingly numerous instances in which the teachings and conduct of Jesus were in agreement with what has been recorded of the Essenes by both Josephus and Philo, but he does not avoid all allusion to them. He speaks in disparaging terms of Josephus, but says nothing to invalidate his history, and he admits that Philo was a good man, a great thinker, and a contemporary of Jesus. He tells us the Essenes were an exclusive, ascetic, and isolated community, with whose discourage-

[1] Matthew i. 25.

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ment of marriage and withdrawal from action, the Gospels have no sympathy, and to whom Jesus never alluded, unless it be in those passages where he reprobates those who abstain from anointing themselves with oil when they fast, and hide their light under a bushel In these instances, Farrar admits, reference is probably made to the Essenes. He further remarks that the period in which Jesus lived was an epoch so troubled and so restless, that it was excusable for an Essene to embrace a life of celibacy, and to retire from the society of man. This is exactly what Jesus did. It is undeniable that he was a celibate himself, and encouraged others to become irretrievably so, and also that he was a great recluse. Not to dwell on the fact of his long seclusion till he reached middle age, he often retired from the world; he was not always preaching, as witness his forty days in "the wilderness,"[1] his retirement "into a solitary place,"[2] his departure "into a mountain to pray,"[3] his going "into a desert place,"[4] his going "into a mountain himself alone,"[5] and his hiding himself on several occasions.[6] In fact, the time came quite early in his ministry when "he would not walk in Jewry,"[7] or, if he did so at all, it was done secretly, for it is afterwards emphatically said, "He walked no more openly among the Jews."[8]

Admitting that the parents of Jesus were Essenes, their going into Egypt, from whatever cause, is easily understood, as it has been shown there were establishments of this sect in that country. We are not obliged to connect their journey there with any

[1] Matthew iv. 1, 2. [2] Mark i. 35. [3] Mark vi. 46.
[4] Luke iv. 42. [5] John vi. 15. [6] John viii. 59; xii. 36.
[7] John vii. 1. [8] John xi. 54.

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miraculous incident; it may, in fact, have been no unusual event for Joseph to go there. Farrar remarks that Egypt has in all ages been the natural place of refuge for all who were desirous to leave Palestine, and that even in those times it could have been reached in three days. Another writer says it was "the simplest thing in those days to step over the frontier round the corner of the Mediterranean into Egypt—just as we slip over to Boulogne or Paris; the road from ancient times was so beaten a track that the very cab and horse fares are mentioned. (*See* 1 Kings x. 29.)"[1] The early years of Jesus are involved in much obscurity, according to the Scripture; but not sufficiently so to affect our general argument. Matthew makes the departure into Egypt to have taken place almost immediately after his birth, and he is stated to have remained there with his parents till Herod was dead, supposed to have been about six years afterwards. Luke, on the contrary, says that Mary, after "the days of her purification according to the law of Moses," which were one month, during which the parents of Jesus and himself were apparently unmolested, brought the latter to Jerusalem openly "to present him to the Lord," and that when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, "they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth," where it further appears from his narrative they resided henceforth for years. It is quite apparent that the accounts of Matthew and of Luke are irreconcilable; they cannot both of them be true: consequently, possibly neither of them.

Presuming that Joseph belonged to the Essenes, or that he held intercourse with them, the earliest education of Jesus may have been commenced and continued among

[1] "The Picture of Jesus," by Haweis, p. 18.

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them, and from them he may have imbibed those doctrines he afterwards disseminated. So unable, in fact, is Farrar himself to account for the precociousness of Jesus as recorded in Luke, that he cannot but candidly admit that "in any case it is clear our Lord, from his earliest infancy, must have been thrown into close connection with several kinsmen or brothers, a little older or a little younger than himself, who were men of marked individuality, of burning zeal, of a simplicity almost bordering on Essenic asceticism." This is a remarkable admission from such an authority, and we are entitled to all, and more than all, it embraces. Surrounded, as it is allowed Jesus must have been in early life, by men of "an almost Essenic asceticism," is it any wonder that when he attained to a full age he was fully equipped to impart the doctrines and to inculcate the practices of the Essenes? Among this meditative and intelligent sect—gathered from rich and poor, both in India and Egypt, recruited from men of all ages, and of varied experiences and attainments—there would doubtless be many cultivated and educated men, acquainted with various languages and intimately versed in the literature of their own and of other countries. They would resemble, in fact, in a great degree, those nobles, scholars, travellers, and tired, wearied, and battered warriors who, in our Middle Ages, retired to sequestered valleys or mountain slopes throughout Europe, to spend the remainder of their days in seclusion, prayers, and pious exercises. In intercourse with such society as was doubtless to be found among the Essenes, perhaps passing years at a time among them, it must have been easy for Jesus, gifted so fully as he was by nature, to have acquired that knowledge of "the Law and the Prophets," that ability to select and

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to read from them extracts in the synagogues, which extorted the admiration and surprise of his hearers, and caused them to exclaim, "How knoweth this man letters?" assuming, no doubt, that he had "never learned."[1] No writers have been hardy enough to assert that the knowledge Jesus manifested was acquired in any other mode than that which is usual; he must have been taught by those who at first knew more than himself, though he was probably an exceedingly apt and intelligent pupil.

It is not our intention to review the entire contents of Farrar's "Life of Christ," written as it is in the choicest English, and embellished and illustrated with a profusion of references to the Apocryphal Gospels, Jewish legends, biblical texts, rabbinical and talmudic lore, patristic sayings, poetical extracts, and constant allusions to mediæval monks and the founders or devotees of celibate orders, as St. Thomas of Aquino, St. Francis, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, Loyola, and to the reformers Luther, Calvin, and their contemporaries. Earnestly as he strives to enforce the teachings of his Church as regards the divinity of Jesus by the testimony of the evangelical records, he makes, from time to time, such admissions respecting the Gospel narratives, as must cause deep reflections in thinking minds as to their absolute value as fountains of infallible truth. If, indeed, we are permitted to doubt, first in one direction and then in another, what criteria have those who consider themselves orthodox, of the historical accuracy of the Gospels in their most essential and important parts? Thus Farrar tells us, when writing of the temptations recorded as undergone by Jesus in the wilderness, that

[1] John vii. 15.

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their order "is given differently by St. Matthew and St. Luke; St. Matthew placing second the scene on the pinnacle of the Temple, and St. Luke the visions of the kingdoms of the world," and he naïvely adds the remark, "both orders cannot be true." Writing of the narrative in Luke viii. 32, 33, concerning the devils who entered into a herd of many swine, he assures us that "if any reader imagines that in this brief narrative to a greater extent than in any other, there are certain *nuances* of expression in which subjective inferences are confused with exact realities, he is holding a view which has the sanction of many wise and thoughtful Churchmen, and has a right to do so without the slightest imputation on the orthodoxy of his belief." Now, it may justly be asked if, without "the slightest imputation on the orthodoxy" of our belief, we may doubt the truthfulness of this history, why may we not doubt the accuracy of other narratives in the Gospels?

It would be interesting to be informed whence Archdeacon Farrar derives his authority to absolve the readers of the strange narrative of the devils in the herd of swine from the obligation to believe it, equally with other remarkable events recorded in the New Testament. It is certainly an unusual thing for an orthodox writer of such an important book as a "Life of Christ," not only to disbelieve the plain records of the Gospels himself, but to encourage others to do this likewise; to tell them, in fact, that they are dispensed from the literary or religious duty to credit incidents, narrated apparently in all good faith, by those we have (after Farrar's admissions, it cannot be truly said *known*) of the history of Jesus.

It is difficult to understand what the modern "Lives

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of Christ" or "Pictures of Jesus" written by clergymen are intended for, so ignored, refined, or explained away are many of the most pronounced statements of the Gospels, that they become more or less shadowy or suppressed. Such books are surely not intended to supply their readers with *evidences* of Christianity. In "The Picture of Jesus," by the Rev. H. R. Haweis, M.A., published since Farrar's "Life of Christ, what we speak of here is particularly noticeable. We will cite a few instances of the perverted criticisms we have observed in his book, premising, what should never be forgotten, that the whole value of the Gospels, as a revelation, depends on their literal truthfulness. If the events narrated did not happen; are to be regarded as merely figurative or symbolical; or are related by the several evangelists in such different modes as to throw absolute doubt on their divergent histories, then it is in vain for expounders of the Scriptures to throw blame on persons who demur, in any degree, to their fidelity. It is, however, really true that many have first had their suspicions aroused, that unquestioning belief is folly, by the laboured efforts of "defenders of the faith" to explain the unexplainable, or to reconcile absolutely conflicting accounts of the same events.[1] Nevertheless, we are often told that "Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith, which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."[2] Luke iii. 22, distinctly tells us, speaking of Jesus, that

[1] "To a mind which has never nourished objections to revelation, a book of evidences may be the means of first suggesting them."—Mark Pattison, B.D., in "Essays and Reviews."

[2] Athanasian Creed, in Book of Common Prayer.

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"the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.'" Concerning this passage, Haweis says, "The shining dove and the heavenly voice need not disturb us, since most people gifted with common sense, following St. Jerome and Theodoret, explain that we need suppose nothing more than a light—probably a sunbeam—through a cloud, which, to the spiritual eye, was the holy dove, and a peal of thunder from the cloud, which, to the spiritual ear, was a heavenly voice."[1] This sort of exposition looks very much like charging the evangelist with downright falsehood, but it corresponds with the views of some of the very earliest of the Christian fathers; as, before the two writers Haweis refers to, Origen had written, "It is very easy for any one who pleases to gather out of Holy Scripture what is recorded indeed as having been done, but what, nevertheless, cannot be believed as having reasonably and appropriately occurred according to the historical account," and he gives some suitable examples from the Old Testament in proof of his assertion; after which he continues, "The same style of scriptural narrative occurs abundantly in the Gospels, as when the devil is said to have placed Jesus on a lofty mountain, that he might show him from thence all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. How could it literally come to pass, either that Jesus should be led up by the devil into a high mountain, or that the latter should show him all the kingdoms of the world (as if they were lying beneath his bodily eyes and adjacent to one mountain),

[1] "The Picture of Jesus," p. 29.

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i.e. the kingdom of the Persians and Scythians and Indians? or how could he show in what manner the kings of these kingdoms are glorified by men? And many other instances similar to these will be found in the Gospels by any one who will read them with attention, and will observe that in those narratives which appear to be literally recorded there are inserted and interwoven things which cannot be admitted historically, but which may be accepted in a spiritual signification."[1]

If teachers in Sunday schools, and curates in village churches, may thus explain the absolute statements of what so many regard with the utmost reverence as certain testimonies to the divinity of Jesus, on the principles of "common sense," then *they* are sceptics, *they* are unbelievers, and they have no right whatever to denounce others who may believe either a little more or a little less than themselves, or who refuse to give credence to any statement of a miraculous character they find in the Scriptures.

Haweis, like Farrar, throws great doubt upon the history of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, Matthew iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1-13. He tells his readers that Church writers from Origen to Schleiermacher and Neander "have agreed that the whole story is symbolical." In writing thus he seems to doubt even the veracity of Jesus, and he tells us "the account can only have come from Jesus himself."

The difficulty of accepting the statement of single individuals who testify that they have been selected to behold or hear what is concealed from the world at large

[1] "De principiis." Chapter 1, section 16.

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has been noticed in most ages. Thus Origen asks the imaginary Jew, to whom Celsus attributed the objection that the apparition of the dove and the voice heard by Jesus at his baptism were seen and heard by him alone, how he would get over similar difficulties when applied to the Hebrew records? His words, highly suggestive, are as follows:—"One might say to the Jew, when expressing his disbelief of the appearance, and thinking to assail it as a fiction, 'How are you able to prove that the Lord spake to Adam, or to Eve, or to Cain, or to Noah, or to Abraham, or to Isaac, or to Jacob, those words which he is recorded to have spoken to these men?' And to compare history with history, I would say to the Jew, Even your own Ezekiel writes, saying, 'The heavens were opened, and I saw a vision of God.' After relating which, he adds, 'This was the appearance of the glory of the Lord; and he said to me,' &c. Now, if what is related of Jesus be false, since we cannot, as you suppose, clearly prove it to be true, it being seen or heard by himself alone, why should we not rather say that Ezekiel also was dealing in the marvellous when he said, 'The heavens were opened,' &c. Nay, even Isaiah asserts, 'I saw the Lord of hosts, sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the seraphim stood around about it: one had six wings, and the other had six wings! How can we tell whether he really saw them or not."

Again, Haweis referring to Matthew xvi. 27, 28, and Matthew xxvii. 31, in which Jesus spoke of his return to earth within the lifetime of some of his hearers, says, "If Jesus really foretold his own coming in the clouds, as one passage implies, within a few years, *he was mistaken,* for in that way he has not yet come." The

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examples we have given will suffice to show the inconsistencies of writers like Farrar and Haweis, who certainly have no right to judge others for any incredulity they may express regarding the New Testament history.

Farrar affirms that the Gospels display no sympathy with that discouragement of marriage which was so often manifested by the Essenes. We differ from him totally on this point. On the contrary, we are expressly told that Jesus taught as follows:—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."[1] This passage shows that in order to be a complete disciple of Jesus, a man was to regard *his wife*, as well as his other relations, even his father and mother, with the utmost indifference. In such a degree did Jesus require the renunciation of family obligations, that he is recorded to have refused an intending follower permission to go and bury his own father; as we have previously commented upon.

We cannot, in fact, refuse to recognize in the teachings of Jesus a disposition to exalt, equally with the Essenes, a life of singleness above that of matrimony. His own example is a striking proof of the estimation in which he held celibacy, as he never married. He even commended some who had proceeded so far in their zeal for continence as to render it impossible for them to retrace their steps, even if they had afterwards wished to marry. How emphatically is this shown in the following words, addressed to his disciples:—"There are some eunuchs which were so from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men, and

[1] Luke xiv. 26.

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there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."[1] And not a few in the early Church did receive this saying, to the extent of inflicting on themselves frightful mutilations. This practice reached its height about the second century. The unnatural usage we speak of became so frequent in the early Christian ages among the most ardent converts, that Constantine, the Roman Emperor, was obliged at last to enact a special law against it.

That Jesus in Matthew xix. 12, referred to a custom not uncommon among the Essenes, was the opinion of a careful student of the Scriptures, who, in commenting on the passage, says, "I believe our Lord alludes to the case of the Essenes, one of the most holy and pure sects among the Jews."[2] A more recent author remarks on the same verse as follows:—"This passage clearly shows that some of the Jewish, as well as the heathen ascetics of that period, thought it a great merit to become eunuchs, in order to secure themselves more effectually from temptation to lead an impure life, and, consequently, obtain an exalted position in Paradise, like that of the chaste priests whom Æneas met in the Elysian Fields (Æneid, lib. vi., 661). There can be little doubt that this further instruction which Jesus gives his followers, is only a delicate and circuitous mode of enjoining the same practice. It is well known that the early Christians understood these hard precepts in a literal sense, and some of the more zealous and austere literally obeyed them, which has been done even here and there by a

[1] Matthew xix. 12.

[2] Read Dr. A. Clarke's remarks on this verse in his "Commentary of the Old and New Testaments."

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fanatic in later times."[1] In our own day a sect exists in Russia, the members of which regard with profound reverence the words in Matthew xix. 12. These they are said to carry out in practice to their legitimate signification, after first becoming the fathers of one or two children. They justify this actual renunciation of their wives by quoting the words of Jesus given in Luke xiv. 26. They go by the name of the Skoptzi, and number at present about fifty thousand persons. They are described as a harmless people, opposed to war, industrious, and in many respects admirable in their customs. But their peculiar tenets render them very obnoxious to the Government, and they are consequently subject to most severe treatment by it, and they are also cruelly persecuted by the orthodox church.

Long before the time of Jesus, the rigour of the old Mosaic law in reference to eunuchs appears to have softened. In that code we find that such mutilated persons should not even enter into the congregation of the Lord;[2] but he who is called the evangelical prophet did not disdain to write, "Thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."[3] It appears that the prophet Daniel, from the records we have of him, was, in all probability, himself a eunuch.[4] In a book, the canonicity of which is accepted by the largest section of the Christian Church, we also read,

[1] "The Real Jesus," by Vickers, 1891.

[2] Deuteronomy xxiii. 1. [3] Isaiah lvi. 4, 5.

[4] Compare 2 Kings xx 17, 18, and Isaiah xxxix. 7, with Daniel i. 3, 6, 7.

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"Blessed is the eunuch, which with his hands hath wrought no iniquity, nor imagined wicked things against God: for unto him shall be given the special gift of faith and an entrance into the temple of the Lord."[1]

"There can be no doubt," says a writer well versed in Jewish history and usages, "that Jesus refers to the Essenes in Matthew xix. 12, when he speaks of those who abstain from marriage for the kingdom of heaven's sake; since they were the only section of the Jews who voluntarily imposed upon themselves a state of celibacy, in order that they might devote themselves more closely to the service of God. And 1 Corinthians vii. can hardly be understood without bearing in mind the notions about marriage entertained by this God-fearing and self-denying order."[2]

When we attentively study the history of Jesus imperfectly as it has come down to us, we cannot fail to notice his entire freedom from the most important and pre-eminent of all natural emotions;—the usual placidity and tranquility of his temper, the ease with which he conversed with women, his frequent interviews with them in all places and at all times, and the undisturbed serenity with which he received their most devoted attentions. The latter is particularly noticeable in the case of the woman in the city of *Nain*, spoken of as a sinner, presumably what we call "an unfortunate," and who, while he sat at meat, washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, kissing his feet all the

[1] "Wisdom of Solomon," iii. 14. The author of this book probably lived about the year 140 B.C.

[2] *See* Art. "Essene," by Dr. C. D. Ginsburg, in Kitto's "Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature."

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time, and anointing them with ointment from a box of alabaster which she carried with her.[1] This episode must not be confounded with the somewhat similar incident recorded elsewhere, and which took place at *Bethany*, in the house of Simon the leper. The name of the woman in the story related by Luke is not given, though the compilers of our authorized version in their heading to the chapter in which it is given, would, without a sufficient reason, have us believe that it was Mary Magdalene who honoured Jesus in the warm-hearted and affectionate manner described in the Gospel. In the narrative given us by the evangelist John, it is distinctly stated that the Mary who anointed Jesus at Bethany was the sister of Lazarus and of Martha, and that in performing her act of reverential love, she not only anointed his feet, wiping them also with her hair, but that she likewise poured the precious ointment of spikenard so liberally upon his head that the house was filled with the odour of it.[2]

It is certain, if the records are trustworthy, that Jesus by his gentleness and other amiable qualities attracted to himself numerous women in very different ranks of life, who considered it a privilege to personally supply his daily wants and to give him of their substance. The names of some of these hospitable and sympathetic females have been transmitted to us. As might be expected, that of Mary Magdalene comes first, then there is that of Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward. Another was named Susanna.[3] Besides these

[1] Luke vii. 37-48.
[2] Matthew xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 3; and John xii. 3.
[3] Luke viii. 3.

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we are told there were "many others."[1] It is quite evident Jesus was by no means the friendless wanderer some have imagined. He had influential female patrons in various households, able and even anxious to minister to his need. They took care of him in life, and gathered together around his grave at the last. Some of them even followed him from Galilee to Jerusalem.[2] They saw him crucified and placed in the tomb, and witnessed how his body was laid. They gathered disconsolately about the sepulchre, and were the first to discover that he had already risen or been removed from it. Among these devotees we find named once more Mary Magdalene, the Joanna already mentioned, Mary the mother of James, and "other women."[3]

A peculiar sanctity appears in all ages to have been attached to virginity, and special reference has been paid to it in most countries. The Greeks respected chastity in their priestesses, and the Romans considered it sacred in their vestals, who were always virgins. The high priests under the Mosaic ritual were not permitted to take any but virgins for their wives;[4] the Hebrews as a nation were often spoken of under the similitude of a virgin, in such phrases as "the virgin daughter of Zion,"[5] "the virgin daughter of my people,"[6] and virgin daughter of Israel."[7] The essential distinction of Jesus above all other men is that he is said to have been born of a virgin;[8] the kingdom of heaven is "likened unto ten virgins;"[9] and in the Apocalypse those who are mentioned as privileged to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth are "virgins," *men* who have

[1] Luke viii. 3. [2] Luke xxiii. 55. [3] Luke xxiv. 10.
[4] Leviticus xxi. 14. [5] Isaiah xxxvii. 22. [6] Jeremiah xiv. 17.
[7] Jeremiah xxxi. 4. [8] Luke i. 27-31. [9] Matthew xxv. 1.

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not been "defiled with women."[1] The influence of this idea still exists, and a recent author assures us that "in Christianity scarcely any other single circumstance has contributed so much to the attraction of the faith as the ascription of virginity to its female ideal."[2]

Not only did the teachings of Jesus tend to exalt a celibate life over the married state, but the great apostle of the Gentiles gave the weight of his example and precept to the same end, as we read in 1 Corinthians vii. 1, 8, 28, and the influence of these two eminent preachers has decided from the earliest ages of the Christian dispensation the lot of untold multitudes of men and women, who otherwise would have been united together. Even after marriage the precepts of the apostle Paul have in some instances prevented the consummation of the rite of matrimony. Thus it is related by an ancient ecclesiastical historian that a devout man named Ammon was compelled to marry by his family, contrary to his desire. On leading his bride, with the usual ceremonies, from the banquet room to the nuptial couch, when their mutual friends had withdrawn, he read to his wife Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, and explained to her the apostle's advice to married persons. He showed her from the Scriptures that it was good to remain a virgin, and affirmed that the immaculate purity of a life of continence placed persons in the nearest relationship to God. She was convinced by his arguments, it is said, but expressed her unwillingness to be separated from him. They, therefore, from that time lived together for eighteen years, but reposed in separate beds. During the whole of this time Ammon

[1] Revelation xiv. 4.

[2] Lecky's "History of European Morals." Vol. i., p. 111.

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occupied himself with monastic exercises, and his wife was at last so affected by his virtues that she proposed they should live apart. This they accordingly did in future, and spent the rest of their lives in the greatest abstinence and seclusion. It is recorded that Ammon was extremely averse to nudity, and that he never saw himself naked, being accustomed to say, "It became not a monk to see his own person exposed."[1]

Celibates, among the primitive Christians, were considered as "terrestrial seraphs," a "spiritual aristocracy," particularly the females who took upon themselves the vows of perpetual virginity. The language of the Song of Solomon was applied to these last by St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, as early as A.D. 240, as expressive of the love of Christ to them. Probably in this manner first arose the custom of considering Canticles as referring to the Church at large, and to the love existing between it and Christ. Cyprian's words are as follows:— "We come now to contemplate the lily blossom: and see, O thou, the virgin of Christ! see how much fairer is this thy flower, than any other! look at the special grace which, beyond any other flower of the earth, it hath obtained! Nay, listen to the commendation bestowed upon it by the Spouse himself, when he saith—Consider the lilies of the field (the virgins), how they grow; and yet I say to you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these! Read, therefore, O virgin, and read again, and often read again, and again, this word of thy Spouse, and understand how, in the commendation of this flower, he commends thy glory! He, the all-wise Creator, and Architect of all things, veils all

[1] For further particulars concerning Ammon consult the Ecclesiastical Histories of Socrates and Sozomen.

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the glory of this world, with thy blossom: nor only is the glory equalled by the flower: but he sets the flower above all glory. In the glory of Solomon you are to understand that, whatever is rich and great on earth, and the choicest of all, is prefigured; and in the bloom of thy lily, which is thy likeness, and that of all the virgins of Christ, the glory of virginity is intended . . . . See how, in this song of loves, the Spouse insists upon his fondness for thee—the lily—saying, As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters; and again, My beloved goes up to his spicy flower-beds, and gathers lilies. Admirable lily! the love of the Spouse! lovely lily! which is gathered by the Spouse! Not truly, as I ween, is it gathered that it should wither, but that it should be laid upon the golden altar, which is before the eyes of the Lord. . . . Virginity hath indeed a two-fold prerogative, a virtue which, in others, is single only; for while all the Church is virgin in *soul*, having neither spot, nor wrinkle; being incorrupt in faith, hope, and charity, on which account it is called a virgin, and merits the praise of the Spouse, what praise, think you, are LILIES worthy of, who possess this purity of *body*, as well as in soul, which the Church at large has in soul only! In truth, the virgins of Christ are, as we may say, the fat and marrow of the Church, and by right of an excellence altogether peculiar to themselves, they enjoy his most familiar embraces."[1]

In such impassioned language as the foregoing were men and women, everywhere, encouraged by the early teachers of Christianity to devote themselves to lives of celibacy. The men were allured to worship and to supplicate the Virgin Mary, the immaculate "Mother of

[1] "De Passime Domini." Chapter 28.

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God," and to consecrate their bodies to that inviolate chastity which distinguished her Son, and which he so highly extolled; while women were allured to a spiritual union with him, the Spouse, transcending in its joyous intimacy all that would have been possible for them when he was on earth.

St. Cyprian, reproving the criminal excesses which were notorious among the virgins of his flock, exclaimed, "What have the virgins of the Church to do at promiscuous baths; and there to violate the commonest dictates of feminine modesty! Thus it is that the Church so often has to weep for her virgins; so does she bewail their infamy, and the horrid tales which get abroad."[1] Long before the time of Chrysostom, about the close of the second century, Clement of Alexandria protested against those who, under pretence of bestowing *the kiss of charity* (1 Peter v. 14), did "nothing but make the churches resound;" and he says, "This very thing, the shameless use of the kiss, which ought to be mystic, occasions foul suspicions and evil reports."[2]

In all the ordinary ecclesiastical histories the infamous irregularities of the sworn celibates of the first four or five centuries of our era are glossed over by obscure generalities; so much so, in fact, that we are informed by a competent authority that "no reader of either Mosheim, Milner, or Neander, could fully understand the state of things which is plainly implied in the language of Cyprian and others."[3]

The divinity attributed to Jesus has naturally invested all his words relative to celibacy, marriage, and the

[1] "On the Dress of Virgins" (*De Habitu Virginum*).
[2] "Pædagogus." Book iii., chapter 11.
[3] "Ancient Christianity."

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relation of the sexes to each other, with an importance and influence they would not otherwise have possessed. They have controlled the marital laws of Christian society and nations for eighteen hundred years; and the ideas and practices of innumerable men and women, often to a lamentable extent. Jesus taught the extreme and scarcely true doctrine, that to look on a woman with desire was the same as actual adultery, and equally guilty. As a doctrine of perfection this may be; but, if so, what man has ever been, or is, truly innocent? It is the control and not the absolute suppression of the passions that really constitutes virtue. If we were without sexual impulses we should cease to be men. Much individual mental and physical suffering has arisen by ignoring the teachings and promptings of nature on this subject. Wilhelmine von Hillern, the eminent German novelist, in one of her books, gives a touching description of a young monk of eminent attainments and piety, who, having been fatally attracted by the surpassing loveliness and charms of a lady of honour, confided to a confessor, but also an enemy, his secret infatuation. The latter directed his attention, with peculiar emphasis, to the words of Jesus: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee," &c. The unhappy youth took these words, recalled to his recollection in this manner and on such an occasion, as a divine intimation of the course he should pursue, and with the divided legs of a pair of compasses, destroyed his sight in a moment and for ever, by thrusting them resolutely into both his eyes. The writer of this work can readily believe that such an event really happened, because a similar occurrence is within his own knowledge. In this latter instance, a married man of position was detected in an intrigue

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with another man's wife. Stung with shame and remorse, and remembering and applying the words of Jesus last cited to his own case, he hurried to his home, and, without pausing, destroyed both his eyes with a needle, to the profound grief of many relatives and friends.

Michaelis says, in speaking of the Sermon on the Mount, that "The unlearned are not only incapable of comprehending this discourse, but are in danger, without the assistance of a learned interpreter, of totally perverting its meaning. It is a known fact that very erroneous moral doctrines have been deduced from it."[1]

Among other examples that could be adduced in support of Michaelis's observation on the erroneous moral effects which a literal observance of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount has sometimes produced, may be given a story related to us by a medical man as having come under his own notice while walking one of the London hospitals. A Roman Catholic servant, in confession, informed her priest that she had been guilty of taking a little sugar out of her mistress's sugar basin. He accordingly admonished her, and repeated the words of Jesus, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee," &c. The poor girl took the command in its naked meaning, went home, and, with a chopper in her left hand, cut the right one clean off! Not content with doing this, she then thrust the left one into the fire and burnt it as much as she could.

Another thoughtful writer remarks on the same subject as follows: "In some of our Lord's discourses he speaks of 'the blessedness of poverty': of the hardness

[1] "Introduction to the New Testament." Vol. iii., p. 313.

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which they that have riches will experience 'in attaining eternal life.' 'It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye;' and, 'Son, thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;' and again, 'One thing thou lackest, go, sell all that thou hast.' Precepts like these do not appeal to our own experience of life; they are unlike anything that we see around us at the present day, even among good men; to some among us they will recall the remarkable saying of Lessing,—'that the Christian religion had been tried for eighteen centuries; the religion of Christ remained to be tried!' To take them literally would be injurious to ourselves and to society (at least, so we think). Religious sects or orders who have seized this aspect of Christianity have come to no good, and have often ended in extravagance. It will not do to go into the world saying, 'Woe unto you, ye rich men;' or, on entering a noble mansion, to repeat the denunciations of the prophet about 'cedar and vermilion;' or, on being shown the prospect of a magnificent estate, to cry out, 'Woe unto them that lay field to field that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.' Times have altered, we say, since these denunciations were uttered; what appeared to the prophet or apostle a visitation of the appointments of Providence, has now become a part of it. It will not do to make a great supper, and mingle at the same board the two ends of society, as modern phraseology calls them, fetching in 'the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind,' to fill the vacant places of noble guests. That would be eccentric in modern times, and even hurtful. Neither is it suitable for us to wash one another's feet, or to perform any other menial office, because our Lord set us the example. The customs of society do not admit of it; no

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good would be done by it, and singularity is of itself an evil. Well, then, are the precepts of Christ not to be obeyed? Perhaps, in their fullest sense, they cannot be obeyed."[1] Professor Jowett might fitly have included in the above remarks the peculiar tenets of Jesus on the subjects of family obligations, marriage, divorce, and celibacy.

If it were our intention to trace the origin of the unnatural system of celibacy much anterior to the time of Jesus, we might show it has existed in Thibet and Tartary from the earliest ages. Even in the present day, numerous monasteries or "lamaseries," as they are called, exist in pristine rigour in these countries, filled with secluded devotees, who dwell in their separate cells or huts just as the Therapeuts are described by Philo to have formerly done in Egypt.[2] It is more than probable that monasticism originated in Thibet, India and Tartary, and was introduced into Egypt, Greece, Italy and Palestine ages before the time of Jesus.

One of the Annalists, so often referred to, speaks of those who forsook all for the sake of living the life of the Essenes, as sometimes leading an unusually solitary life. He says, "They take up their abode outside of walls, or gardens, or solitary lands, seeking for a desert place." In such a climate as Palestine has, during a great portion of the year, such a life for a time would not be attended with all the inconvenience and discomfort which would be the case in colder regions. We need hardly be surprised then to read of John the

[1] Professor Jowett "On the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Essays and Reviews.*

[2] For further information on this subject the reader is referred to "Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China," by M. Huc.

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Baptist's partiality for the wilderness,[1] or that Jesus, at the outset of his mission, exclaimed, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."[2] That this was not always the case we learn from the fact that at one time, perhaps afterwards, he abode in Bethabara (or rather, as it should be, Bethany) beyond Jordan.[3]

In moving from place to place it was the custom of the Essenes to carry nothing superfluous with them. The very language of Jesus to his disciples is just what an experienced follower of this sect may be conceived to have given to new converts when setting out on their journeys. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves;"[4] they were not even to take bread.[5] All this was rendered unnecessary for the Essenes, which is apparent from what is said of them by Josephus:—"Nor do they either buy or sell anything to one another: but every one of them gives what he hath to him that wanteth it, and receives from him again in lieu of it what may be convenient to himself; and although there be no requital made, they are fully allowed to take what they want from whomsoever they please." So Jesus taught his disciples, and instructed each of them thus, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away;"[6] and when he was asked by the people what they should do, after he had exhorted them to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, he answered, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he

[1] Matthew iii. 1. [2] Matthew viii. 20. [3] John i. 28, and x. 40.
[4] Matthew x. 9, 10. [5] Mark vi. 8, and Luke ix. 1.
[6] Matthew v. 42.

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that hath meat let him do likewise."[1] We can easily understand from the foregoing that the Essenes did not require extensive wardrobes; in fact, they were not allowed by "the rules of their order," a change of garments, of sandals or of shoes, till the old habiliments were worn to pieces or destroyed by age. "They do not own two cloaks or a double set of shoes," was said of them long after the time of Jesus.[2]

Philo, speaking of the Essenes, says:—"There is no one who has a house so absolutely his own property, that it does not in some sense also belong to everyone: for besides that they all dwell together in companies, the house is open to all those of the same notions, who come to them from all quarters." Josephus tells us the same thing:—"They have," he says, "no certain city, but many of them dwell in every city, and if any of their sect come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own; and they go into such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them." Surely these descriptions give an explanation of the command of Jesus, when he said to the Twelve, "Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye shall come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or that city, shake off the dust

[1] Luke iii. 11.

[2] The Tenets of the Esseni, in "The Refutation of all the Heresies," by Hyppolytus. Book ix., chapter 15 (A.D. 222).

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of your feet."[1] And, with that terrible intensity of wrath which sometimes seemed to fill his soul, Jesus adds, "Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." The disciples were specially cautioned against importunity in these words, "Go not from house to house."[2] Such commands would be incomprehensible if we were to believe that Jesus intended the disciples to enter indiscriminately any house. They were to "enquire" as to suitable houses, enter them, and if refused hospitality were to leave at once, with what we must regard as equivalent to maledictions. They were to "shake off the dust" of their feet in departing. This is the strongest expression of indignation that the Scripture affords, and would be inappropriate if applied to householders who simply refused to receive perfect strangers. It must, therefore, apply to those Essenes, who, for some reason, refused to receive their brethren. Such conduct would be blameworthy. Essenism was, in fact, a kind of freemasonry, and to be guilty of a neglect of the duties of brotherhood was the most flagitious of crimes. Inhospitality and want of kindness to those related by ties more sacred than the bonds of kindred must have been a most grievous offence, and this fact will enable us to understand the indignation of the apostle John against one who had refused to acknowledge his authority, or to receive some of the disciples. He says, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he

[1] Matthew x. 11-14. [2] Luke x. 7.

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doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."[1]

We read in one of our ancient chronicles that "Those that are caught in any heinous sins, they (the Essenes) cast out of their society; and he who is thus separated from them, does often die after a miserable manner; for as he is bound by the oath he hath been engaged in, he is not at liberty to partake of that food that he meets with elsewhere, but is forced to eat grass, and to famish his body till he perish."[2] The foregoing description of the fate which those who were expelled from "the Church" of the Essenes, corresponds very closely with the directions given by Jesus himself to his followers who were offended with any of their brethren, for it must be observed the rule he prescribes could only apply to such as were under ecclesiastical control. Thus he says, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."[3] A very important fact seems to be proved by the last quotation, which is, that in the time of Jesus a church existed, and what community could this be but that of the Essenes? They had, as we learn from

[1] 3 John 9, 10.
[2] Josephus.
[3] Matthew xviii. 15, 16, 17.

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Josephus, an ecclesiastical system already formed, long before Jesus was born, and their very mode of excommunication was similar to that prescribed by him. The term "church" must have been one that was well understood in his day, or it would not have been used in such a familiar manner. So we find he uses it on another occasion, when he says, "Upon this rock I will build *my* church," in contradistinction probably to that of the Essenes; for, although Jesus evidently resembled them in most particulars, his teaching was in some respects more defined and personal than theirs, so that we can perfectly comprehend how he could, in his desire to build up a separate body, one distinct from all others, however similar in some respects, speak of *his* church. Accordingly, it is to be noticed that this word was in constant use immediately after the death of Jesus. Thus we read of it frequently both in the singular and plural form in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Epistles, and in the Book of Revelation. In one place we are informed that persons were "added to the church,"[1] in another reference is made to "the Churches throughout all Judea and Galilee."[2] And, again, we read of elders being ordained "in every church."[3] And as "Grecians" were soon permitted to join the church which Jesus established,[4] so it was not long before the missionary zeal of his first followers formed churches over a great portion of Asia Minor. Consequently we read of the "seven churches" of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, and also of the church at Corinth, at Rome, &c.

It is worthy, moreover, of remark that the term

[1] Acts ii. 47.
[2] Acts ix. 31.
[3] Acts xiv. 23.
[4] Acts vi. 1.

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"church" used in all these instances is precisely the same in the original wherever it is used. We meet with it first in the Gospel of Matthew, and elsewhere it is always identical with the word said to have been used by Jesus.

When males and females among the Therapeuts joined together in public worship, the former were divided from the latter. This custom was general in the early church, and is still practised by the German Lutherans, the Moravian Brethren, and the Society of Friends. In Jewish synagogues, likewise, the sexes worship apart. In the earliest period of our era, as Dean Milman tells us, "the Christian Church was almost universally formed by a secession from a Jewish synagogue."[1] Thus we need not be surprised that the first Christians maintained some of the peculiarities of Jewish worship.

The mode of excommunication practised by the Essenes and recommended by Jesus, was also enforced by Paul and the early Christians.[2] It became customary in all the churches to act according to "that law which deprived of ordinances, and excluded from the community persons of vile character, or who were addicted to gross sin, provided they would not reform on being admonished."[3] We think the similarity between the usage of the Essenes and the early church in the matter of discipline is sufficient to warrant our belief that the latter copied the former in their treatment of those who offended against their ecclesiastical regulations.

Philo gives what M. de Pressensé terms a "poetic

[1] "History of Early Christianity." Vol. ii., p. 16.

[2] 1 Corinthians v. 11.

[3] Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History, First Century."

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picture"[1] of the Essenes. We do not see why we should not accept as truthful the description which this Jewish historian has left of the ascetics who congregated on the borders of Lake Maria. It certainly represents a state of society which would be impracticable on a large scale, or amidst the contending interests of modern society; but so would that community of goods which is said in the Acts to have obtained at first among the converts of the apostles. For centuries before, as well as since, the time of Jesus, men whose souls have been filled with a desire for intimate communion with God have secluded themselves from the world; and it has always been believed by many that the Deity reveals himself rather to such than to those whose minds are occupied with mundane affairs. It was when Moses was in the hinder part of the desert that God appeared to him "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush."[2] It was on the desolate heights of Sinai that "God answered him by a voice;"[3] and it was while in a cave, amidst the solitudes of Horeb, that Elijah heard the "still small voice."[4] The habitual residence of the Baptist was the wilderness; and it was in the desert that angels came and ministered unto Jesus.[5] The objection of M. de Pressensé, that, by the partiality of the Essenes for the practice of continence and their habits of cleanliness, they "showed clearly that they regarded matter as the source of evil,"[6] is no more against them as a sect than the idea which obtained among the ancient Hebrews and early Christians, that an abstinence from marital rights

[1] *See* "Jesus Christ, his times, life and work."
[2] Exodus iii. 2. [3] Exodus xix. 19. [4] 1 Kings xix. 12.
[5] Matthew iv. 11. [6] "Jesus Christ, his times, life, and work."

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and washing with "pure water" were conducive to sanctity, and to communion with God in prayer.

Philo furnishes us with a most interesting account of the sacred entertainments of the Therapeuts, which, however, we can only epitomize. He represents them as assembling together in white garments—joyful, but grave, and as standing in rows before sitting down to meat. Raising their eyes and hands to heaven, they prayed to God that the entertainment might be acceptable, welcome, and pleasing. The women shared in these feasts, the greater number of whom, though old, were virgins, though not, as he informs us, through necessity. The men sat on the right hand, and the women, apart from them, on the left. No soft cushions to recline on were allowed, but mats and rugs of the coarsest materials, made from papyrus, were permitted, on which the feasters were able to rest their elbows. No slaves ever waited on them, for they looked on the possession of servants or slaves as wholly contrary to nature. The attendants served the rest of the company of their own free will, but with eagerness and promptitude, anticipating all orders. The most excellent of their young men waited on such occasions, and care was taken that nothing in their appearance should even suggest compulsory or slavish obligation. Wine was not introduced in these feasts, but only the clearest water—cold water being offered to the generality, and hot water to those old men who were accustomed to a luxurious life. On the table was nothing that contained *blood,* but there was bread to eat and salt for seasoning. Hyssop was occasionally

[1] *See* Exodus xix. 14, 15. 1 Samuel xxi. 4, 5. Ezekiel xxxvi. 25. 2 Corinthians vii. 1; and Hebrews x. 22.

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added as an extra sauce for the sake of those who were delicate in their eating. After the meal was concluded, one among them found some passage in the sacred Scriptures to read and explain; and while he did this the utmost stillness prevailed; no one even whispering or breathing hard. The person expounding did not aim at display, or try to obtain credit for cleverness and eloquence, but usually followed a slow method of instruction, dwelling and lingering over his explanations with repetitions, in order to imprint his views deeply in the minds of his hearers. The latter, fixing their eyes and attention on the speaker, indicated their interest and comprehension by nods and looks, and the praise which they were inclined to bestow upon him was manifested by a cheerful demeanour and the gentle manner in which they followed him with their eyes and the forefinger of the right hand.

What Philo calls the "nocturnal festival" succeeded the ceremonies and expositions which took place in the day, and was, if possible, of a still more sacred and spiritual character than the latter. It was celebrated the whole night. All stood up in the middle of the feast, and two choruses, one of men and the other of females, were formed, to each of which there was a leader chosen from the best singers of the band. Then they sang hymns to the praise and glory of God in different metres and times, sometimes all singing together, and at other times moving their hands and dancing in harmony, and uttering in an inspired manner songs of thanksgiving. Again, after each chorus had feasted separately by itself, drinking "the pure wine of the love of God," they united together, and the two became one chorus, forming an excellent concert and a

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truly musical symphony. We are told that on these occasions "the ideas were beautiful, the expressions beautiful, and the chorus-singers were beautiful," while we are assured the end was piety. Such is the description we have given to us of these ancient religious devotees in their solemn festivals, and which forcibly brings to our mind what Jesus and the apostles did at the termination of the eucharist. Two of the evangelists tell us that this solemn ceremony was followed by the singing of "a hymn," after which Jesus and those with him arose and proceeded to the mount of Olives.[1]

In different ages, when a spirit of revival has moved the Christian world, the conduct of the Therapeuts has been occasionally imitated, but such pleasing customs have never been able long to withstand the selfishness and sensuality which inevitably, sooner or later, display themselves in all communistic associations of a religious nature, and which ultimately cause their disintegration.

The Shakers and Junkers of America present many striking points of resemblance to the Essenes in their habits and modes of thought. The former live in separate communities, and though the different sexes dine at the same table, the men and women are, to all intents and purposes, monks and nuns. When married people join the Shakers, as sometimes happens, the husband and wife fall into the order of brother and sister. They live in the same family, but cease to be husband and wife. A convert who joins them has previously to pay off all his debts, discharge all bonds and trusts, renounce all contracts, cancel all wills and settlements, and, like the Essenes of old, give up all

[1] *See* Matthew xxvi. 30; and Mark xiv. 26.

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relations and friends, as fully as though parted from them by the grave. The Junkers, or "Harmless People," as they are often called, term themselves "Brethren." They live in little villages and groups of farms. They permit marriage, like one sect of the Essenes did, but still hold celibacy in the highest honour.[1]

Josephus in various places informs us of the firmness with which the Essenes held to their own views, being willing to endure the most painful torments and death itself rather than renounce their peculiar doctrines and practices. The very sufferings which many of the early Christians endured on account of their religion seem to have been anticipated by the Essenes.

Martyrdom has often appeared to be a desirable termination to a life of piety, and we learn that this sect esteemed death better than life if the former would contribute to their glory.[2] When persecuted by the Romans on account of their religion, they endured the extremity of suffering rather than blaspheme their legislator, or partake of what was forbidden them to eat by the rules of their community. They were tortured, they were burnt and torn to pieces; but, says Josephus, they could not be made to shed a tear, for they "smiled in their very pains, and laughed those to scorn who inflicted the torments upon them, and resigned up their souls with great alacrity, as expecting to receive them again." These facts, and many more which history affords, show to us how insufficient is the argument that Paley employs, when he would infer the divine origin of the Christian

[1] For further particulars of the "Shakers" and "Junkers" the reader is referred to "New America," by W. Hepworth Dixon.

[2] "Wars of the Jews." Book ii., chapter 8.

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religion merely from the sufferings which its first disciples underwent rather than abandon it.[1] Such a proof of honest conviction, as "suffering for conscience' sake" implies, thousands of men, professing the most opposite creeds, have afforded in all ages. The Jews have always been pre-eminent for the fortitude with which they have refused to forsake the commands of their law-giver.[2] All the various sects, besides the Essenes, which arose among them in former times, maintained the peculiarities of their opinions amidst the utmost pangs of torture, and the prospect of a cruel death. The Hindoos, again, have, for an unknown number of centuries, sacrificed themselves and their children in many painful forms of death to the convictions which they held, Sutteeism being distinguished above all for the number of its victims; while, in our own day, a religion professing to be divine, to be founded on revelations and miracles, and attested by the sufferings of martyrs and confessors, has made far more rapid progress in its infancy than did Christianity itself. We refer to Mormonism, that religious wonder of the nineteenth century, the supernatural origin of which phenomenon learned professors may seek to prove, five hundred years hence, by the miracle of its establishment.

Still more recently than Mormonism, a religious movement has taken place in Persia, which, under the name of Babism, has resulted in frightful persecutions of its votaries. A man of the name of *Bab*, described as a mild and unassuming person, in character and opinion a sort of pious and modest Spinosa, was suddenly and

[1] The reader is referred for Paley's reasoning in full on this subject to the first nine chapters of his "Evidences of Christianity."

[2] For a striking instance of this, *see* 2 Maccabeus 7.

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almost in spite of himself, raised to the rank of a worker of miracles and a divine incarnation. Becoming the head of a numerous and fanatical sect, Mohammedism itself stood in danger, and a fearful persecution set in, when thousands of martyrs rushed to death with joyful alacrity, rather than abandon Bab. In 1852 a wholesale slaughter of these devotees took place at Teheran, which is thus described in the pages of M. Renan; "There was on that day in the streets and bazaars of Teheran a spectacle which the residents will never forget. To this moment, when it is talked of, the mingled wonder and horror which the citizens then experienced appears unabated by the lapse of years. They saw women and children walking forward between their executioners, with great gashes all over their bodies and burning matches thrust into the wounds. The victims were dragged along by ropes, and hurried on by strokes of the whip. Children and women went singing to a verse to this effect, 'Verily we came from God, and to him shall we return!' Their shrill voices were loud and clear in the profound silence of the multitude. If one of these poor wretches fell down, and the guards forced him up again with blows or bayonet thrusts, as he staggered on with the blood trickling down every limb, he would spend his remaining strength in dancing and crying in an excess of zeal, 'Verily we are God's, and to him we return!' Some of the children expired on the way. The executioners threw their corpses under the feet of their fathers and sisters, who proudly trampled on them, giving scarcely a second glance at them. At the place of execution life was offered them if they would abjure, but to no purpose. One of the condemned was informed that unless he recanted, the throats of his two

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sons should be cut upon his own bosom. The eldest of these little boys was fourteen years old, and they stood, red with their own blood and with their flesh burned and blistered, calmly listening to the dialogue. The father, stretching himself upon the earth, answered that he was ready; and the eldest boy, eagerly claiming his birthright, asked to be murdered first. Persons who had hardly joined the sect came and denounced themselves, that they might suffer with the rest. Several of the sectaries, to compel them to retract, were tied to the mouths of cannon, with a lighted slow-match attached. The offer was made to them to cut off the match if they renounced Bab. In reply, they only stretched out their hands towards the creeping match, and besought it to hasten and consummate their happiness. A disciple who shared the tortures of Bab, hanging by his side on the ramparts of Tabriz, and awaiting a lingering death, had only one word to say,—'Master, are you satisfied with me?' At length all was over; night closed in upon heaps of mangled carcases; the heads were suspended in bunches on the scaffold, and the dogs of the *Faubourgs* were going in troops towards the place of execution."[1] How forcibly we are reminded by this remarkable account of those Essenes described by Josephus, who "smiled in their very pains, and laughed those to scorn who inflicted the torments upon them," and of the sufferings of the early Christians who refused at the stake, on the cross, or in the amphitheatre, to blaspheme the name of Jesus! The early Christians, indeed, emulated to the full the example of the Essenes, their predecessors, in their religious endurance and steadfastness. Eusebius tells us that during a persecution of Christians at Nicomedia,

[1] "The Apostles," by M. Renan.

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both men and women among them, "with a certain divine and inexpressible alacrity, rushed into the fire." He also speaks of others voluntarily offering their own heads to the executioners, during a persecution in Egypt.

Among the early Christians, martyrdom was regarded as affording an immediate and glorious entrance into heaven, while those who suffered it knew they would receive highest honours among their co-religionists on earth. Thus a desire for martyrdom often became a fixed idea, even in youths. Eusebius informs us that the love of martyrdom so powerfully seized the soul of Origen, though yet an almost infant boy, that he advanced to encounter danger, and was eager to leap forward and rush upon the conflict. Many candidates for martyrdom in those days rushed in crowds to the tribunals, and, reminding the magistrates of the laws in force against Christians, called upon them to execute the decrees in their utmost severity. Notwithstanding all this, it is believed by many able historians that the number of Christian martyrs has been greatly exaggerated by the mistaken zeal of the early fathers and the monkish writers of the Middle Ages. Pressensé, speaking for himself, says, "With Pascal, we are ready to believe martyr-witnesses."[1] How, then, does he accept the testimony of those who, in every age, in all countries, and for the most opposite creeds, have sanctified their faith by the free outpouring of their best blood? The Mohammedans themselves had this test for their religion, as every man who fell in battle while propagating his faith was regarded as a martyr. Nor did they want their martyrs in the full sense of that word. It is related that one follower of Mohammed,

[1] "Life of Jesus."

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named Kohobaid Ebn Adu, being perfidiously sold to the Koreish in the lifetime of the prophet, was put to death by them in a most cruel manner by mutilation, his flesh being cut off piecemeal. Being asked whether he did not wish Mohammed was in his place, he answered, "I would not wish to be with my family, my substance, and my children, on condition that Mohammed was only to be pricked with a thorn."

Men who themselves have died for their opinions have, nevertheless, been sometimes perfectly aware that martyrdom is not a correct criterion by which to judge of the truth of religion. Thus, when fourteen Anabaptists were burned to death in England in 1535, Latimer, who was so soon afterwards to suffer in this way himself, in showing that a courageous and fearless front, and a resistance even unto a fiery death, is no proof of a perfect cause, spoke as follows to a congregation on this subject: "This is no good argument, my friends: this is a deceivable argument: he went to his death boldly—*ergo,* he standeth in a just quarrel. The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England (as I heard of credible men—I saw them not myself) went to their death intrepede, as you will say; without any fear in the world—cheerfully: well, let them go. There was in the old times another kind of poisoned heretics that were called Donatists; and these heretics went to their execution as they should have gone to some jolly recreation or banquet."[1] Latimer was right,—there is, indeed, a vast difference between the truth of any religion and the faith of its professors. Suffering, and even martyrdom, may attest unmistakably to men's conviction of the divine origin of the former,

[1] "Latimer's Sermons," page 160.

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but can by no means prove that it is really of God, however much by these means sincerity and honesty are removed above all suspicion. Viewed in this manner, Christianity must be content to take rank, in this respect, with Essenism and many other forms of belief for which men, in most ages and countries, have been willing to endure the loss of all things, even life itself.

The history of the Essenes is of more consequence than is generally supposed, as it shows that in a great degree they constituted an important body of reformers and freethinkers in the dogmatic and unelastic system of the Jewish Church. In an extended extract from Josephus on their doctrines we shall give further on, this historian says distinctly that the Essenes "did not offer sacrifices," a statement of the utmost importance, as showing the little value this virtuous sect placed upon the objectionable and tedious details of the Mosaic ritual. Whoever will read carefully the numerous and precise directions relating to sacrifices contained in the four last books of the Pentateuch must surely be struck with horror at the sanguinary tendency of the great majority of them. Blood, blood, blood, almost everywhere. If only half of the commandments of that fearful code were ever carried out, slaughter of the most cruel and disgusting description must have been continually in progress day by day, and the priests of the sanctuary voluntarily besmeared with gore more disfiguring than that which marks the workers in our modern abattoirs in the pursuit of their occupation. Besides all this, the name of God or "the Lord" is continually, and, as it appears to us, most unrighteously, evoked in connection with the Jewish sacrificial ordinances, to sanction and justify the most atrocious events, as we shall prove.

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Nothing in connection with the record of these sacrifices and oblations shows, in our opinion, the depraving influence of unthinking belief so much as the fact that millions of highly intelligent men in all civilized countries, and multitudes of delicately nurtured, cultivated, refined, and pure women, have read about them throughout many succeeding generations without protesting and recording their marked repugnance; without seeing that there is no humanity, justice, or sense in many of the proceedings said to have had the approval of the Divine Being.

If anyone demurs at the language here used, let him read again, with thoughtfulness, the minute instructions contained in the Mosaic directions for the killing and offering up of the various kinds of domestic animals, and the smearing of their slaughterers, the priests, with their blood. Also, the instructions about the dismembered parts of the poor victims of a benighted superstition, their livers, their flesh, the fat that covered their inwards, their legs, their cauls, their kidneys, their rumps, their skins and their dung, all of which were duly ordered to be burnt "as a sweet savour, and offering made by fire to the Lord." If all the instructions ordained were ever carried out, the camps of the Israelites, the precincts of their tabernacle, and the courts of their temple, must have resembled reeking shambles, and the smell of roast meat been perpetually wafted to and fro in the air. And then blood, blood, once more and for ever, was to be put upon Aaron, his sons and their successors, upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and the great toe of their right foot, &c. And, as though all this were not sufficient, blood had to be

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"sprinkled upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him."

Dean Stanley thus describes a Jewish sacrifice:—"In the midst of an open court, so that the smoke of the fire, and the odours of the slain animals might go up into the air, stood the altar—a huge platform—detached from all around, and with steps approaching it from behind and from before, from the right and from the left. Around this structure, as in the shambles of a great city, were collected, bleating, lowing, bellowing, the oxen, sheep and goats, in herds and flocks, which, one by one, were led up to the altar, and with the rapid stroke of the sacrificer's knife they received their death-wounds. Their dead carcases lay throughout the court, the pavement streaming with their blood, their quivering flesh placed on the altar to be burnt, the black columns of smoke going up to the sky, the remains to be consumed by the priests or worshippers who were gathered for the occasion as to an immense feast."[1]

Dr. Adam Clarke, Colenso, Milman, and others, have commented adversely respecting the improbable, not to say impossible, numbers so frequently used in the Old Testament in describing events. Similar complaints may justly be advanced as regards the incredible herds and flocks of large and small cattle which are mentioned as having often been sacrificed by the Jewish kings and people. When the ark of the Lord and the tabernacle of the congregation were installed into the oracle of the temple Solomon had built, it is recorded the sheep

[1] "Christian Institutes."

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and oxen killed on that occasion could not be told or numbered for multitude. In the same chapter, however, when referring to the sacrifice of "peace offerings" made by this king unto the Lord, the historian is more precise. He tells us there were slaughtered at that ceremony "two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep."[1] Many persons on reflection will surely be inclined to doubt this account, especially as all these animals had to be killed in detail, bled, skinned and disembowelled on the spot. All this work, and the disposal of the hides, skins, and offal, not to mention the immense collection of carcases, would have required quite an army of butchers and labourers, besides extensive and bulky appliances, such as platforms, hoists, pulleys and ropes for raising heavy and large beasts to be flayed, and separated into quarters, for the purpose of carriage and removal. Similar apparatus are to be found in every modern abattoir, and are absolutely requisite where even small mobs of oxen have to be slaughtered, skinned and eviscerated, otherwise they could scarcely be handled when slain. We are informed that when Hezekiah, on a future occasion, offered up a far less number of animals as a burnt offering, the priests were too few for the business and had to call upon their brethren the Levites to help them.[2]

The most extensive system devised for the slaughtering of animals the world has ever known is at Chicago. The place where they are killed is daily a carnival of blood. Large relays of men, clothed in waterproof apparel, are continually engaged in slaying and dressing

[1] 1 Kings vii. 63. [2] 2 Chronicles xxix. 34.

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cattle and pigs brought by railway from all parts of the United States. They have the most mechanical and best modern appliances to assist them, and quick dispatch is made of each animal. And yet to kill and properly prepare ten thousand oxen in a day is considered a great feat. The hogs slain have not to be skinned as sheep would have to be, nor have they pelts, like the latter, to lumber the abattoirs. Yet it is a good day's work if twenty thousand pigs are disposed of in that time. When these facts are considered, how utterly incredible appears the history of Solomon's great offering, in which the animals, besides being killed, skinned, and cleaned, had all to be consumed on an altar, or else prepared for food.

The number of oxen consumed by a town and suburban population of about 130,000 people in an Australian colony is nearly 22,000 in twelve months. The same population, who eat meat almost without restriction, consume in a year about 360,000 sheep. The number of cattle or oxen used represents as nearly as possible the same number as Solomon is related to have slain at *one time*, and the sheep about two-thirds more than those said to have been killed at the dedication of the temple. Yet all the Australian animals mentioned have to be brought in, from time to time, from extensive tracts of country, often hundreds of miles from the central market, and require for that purpose many men on horseback and drivers on foot, assisted by well-trained dogs. A large number of persons in the butchery trade are engaged during the whole year in killing and distributing these extensive drives; yet Solomon is related to have slain the creatures forming his "peace offerings" in a few days at the furthest.

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David, the father of Solomon, was not allowed by God, we are informed in Scripture, to build the Temple, because he "had shed blood abundantly." If Solomon did not equal him in shedding the blood of innocent men, women, and children (*see* 1 Samuel xxvii. 9-11), he certainly surpassed him in the multitude of dumb and helpless creatures he put to a cruel death, for apparently no suitable cause, unless, indeed, they were, as the authodox say, really types of that Great Sacrifice to be hereafter offered up to God in the person of his Son, and their sufferings meant to prefigure his inconceivable agonies. Surely, however, this conception of the Jewish sacrifices is far too gross to be in any degree true.

Allowing for exaggeration in the numbers given in the Old Testament in the records of these wholesale and useless sacrifices, the imagination cannot but be shocked at the sanguinary scenes that must have been enacted at such times, the violence used to bring the devoted victims to the place of their immolation, the seas of gore poured out, and in which the officials would necessarily have to wade; the waste of valuable food wantonly destroyed; and at all the after intolerable consequences that could not but follow from the inevitable putrifaction and noisome mal-odours that would arise in the localities of such proceedings, enacted in the name of the Almighty, and to please him! On a full consideration of the above history, it will not be unsafe to conclude that such a holocaust as Solomon is said to have made at the dedication of the Temple never took place, at least on anything equal to the scale on which it is described in the first Book of Kings and the second of Chronicles.

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So long as the consequences involved in the correctness and integrity of the records of both the Old and New Testaments are stated to be so vital to the eternal interests of mankind, as is insisted upon by the majority of Christians, so long such inquiries as the foregoing, as to the value and trustworthiness of the biblical narratives, will continue to be made. A very recent writer, in one of our most popular periodicals, has lately assured the readers of it, that "*The whole history of Israel* is so closely bound up in the passion of him to whose life that history was the prelude, that it is impossible to take any great scene out of that history, without more or less prefiguring to the disciples of Christ some aspect of the greatest crisis in human history."[1] A statement like this, of course, appropriately applies to such a prominent event in Hebrew history as the dedication of Solomon's Temple, itself but a type of that future spiritual, yet bodily temple, to be laid low and prostrated, and afterwards to be raised in three days.[2]

The finding of types in the Old Testament history, prefiguring events relating to the coming dispensation, has been a favourite occupation with Christians from the time of the apostles. St. Paul was especially addicted to this practice. Some of the fathers of the Church professed to consider that "the line of scarlet thread" (Joshua ii. 18) which Rahab was directed to bind on her window, was typical of the blood of Jesus Christ. The same custom has not unfrequently been carried to a grotesque extreme. One writer of modern times, referring to the patriarch Jacob, says: "His election in the womb signifies how all the seed of Jacob are

[1] *The Spectator*, February 4th, 1893, page 156.
[2] John ii. 19-21.

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chosen to salvation. Was not Esau Jacob's brother? (Malachi i. 2); his elder brother, and, indeed, a stronger child? for his having hairy skin portended the vigour of his constitution. Yet was he not chosen to inherit the patriarchal blessing. The happy persons whom he chooses to inherit the blessings of eternity, are so far from being better than their fellow creatures, that, for the most part, they are greatly inferior, both in the endowments of the mind and outward distinctions. *Even so, Father:* for so it seemeth good in thy sight! (Matthew xi. 26.)" [1]

This author goes so far as to see a type of the apostles—as chosen, humble, but efficient orators over more educated and able speakers, to spread the Gospel—in the jaw-bone of the ass wherewith Samson slew the Philistines. He tells us that "Samson, who wanted not spears and swords, was directed to use no other weapon than the jaw-bone of an ass; so Jesus Christ, who could have commanded the secular arm to spread the conquest of his gospel, or have ordained strength out of the mouths of the eloquent orators and profound philosophers, yet chose contemptible fishermen, and perfected praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings." [2]

Wandering missionaries, self-elected, and of a lower educational standing than the writer last cited, sometimes abuse, almost to a profane degree, the typical mode of illustrating Scripture we have described. Such a man from America, called "Californian Taylor," once exclaimed to his startled congregation in one of the Australian colonies: "Mutton is selling in the market at 3*d* per pound, and here am I, offering you the Lamb of God for nothing!" It is possible that the

[1] McEwen "On the Types." [2] Ibid.

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invitation of this uncultured preacher was an unconscious parody on the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, that the *actual* body and blood of Jesus are partaken of by the faithful at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

It is a noteworthy fact that at ordinary sacrifices, when daily or domestic offerings were made, all surplus meat not consumed on the altars was reserved expressly for the priests, for it was distinctly ordered that a stranger was not to eat thereof. Any food not consumed as such, had to be burnt. But at the period of the Passover a regular saturnalia sometimes commenced, and there was an abundance for all. Then, in all directions, was roasting, and boiling, and seething of meat, in pots, caldrons and pans, carried hither and thither by hungry men, women and children. These feastings lasted seven days. What a time of rioting and of waste all these details suggest![1] Occasionally there was an unseemly contention about the distribution of sacrificial meat, as when the unruly sons of Eli forcibly insisted on having it raw, to roast, instead of taking it boiled.[2]

Christian writers, notwithstanding the innumerable sacrifices of the old dispensation, assure us—

> "Not all the blood of beasts
> On Jewish altars slain,
> Could give the guilty conscience peace,
> Nor wash away its stain,"

and that the Passover itself, as well as all the slaughtered animals, were merely typical of that greater sacrifice to be presented to the Heavenly Father in the person of his immaculate Son. St. Paul confirms this view when he tells us that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

[1] 2 Chronicles xxxv. 18. [2] 1 Samuel ii. 13-16.

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Thus are bloody Jewish rites and Christian doctrines inseparably connected together.

If the evil of all the sanguinary oblations just described had ended only in the often useless and cruel death of innocent creatures, and in the cultivation of savage and brutal instincts in their destroyers, it would have been deplorable, but the mischief went much further. From the killing in sacrifice of bullocks, cows, rams, sheep, goats, calves and doves, the offering of human beings to Jehovah, on certain occasions, was provided for in the laws he is said to have given to Moses, and thus was granted a terrible sanction to their religious immolation. How often such unnatural events took place among the Israelites is not recorded, but there is no doubt about the facts themselves, if we may believe the history handed down to us. Thus, we read in that most frightful chapter in Numbers (the thirty-first), that after a successful battle, in which a large number of children and female prisoners were taken alive, to the great displeasure of the "meek" man Moses, he said in wrath to the officers who had saved them—Kill "every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him [what an inquisition to be committed to the decision of a rude and brutal soldiery!], but all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves"—a fate infinitely worse than death, we presume many Christian women of the present day would consider. And, out of the multitude of human beings thus reserved from immediate slaughter, we read that "the Lord's tribute was thirty and two persons. And Moses gave the tribute, which was the Lord's heave-offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the Lord commanded Moses."

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Now, what was ordained to be done with the Lord's tribute? This most cruel edict had to be executed to the letter: "No devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of *man* and beast, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death."[1] Poor devoted Midianitish maidens, "the Lord's tribute," the consecrated band, "most holy unto the Lord," what became of them, but that, in obedience to this most wicked and blasphemous order, they were, with what details of infamy and barbarity we cannot say, but only imagine, all surely put to death.

Criticism would willingly suggest that Moses, who married a Midianitish woman, Zipporah; whose father-in-law was Jethro, the high priest of the Midianites, and who had hospitably received him when in exile, fleeing for his life from Egypt; and whose two sons, Gershon and Eliezer, were half Midianites, was not likely to have given such cruel orders against the people among whom he had lived for many years. Humanity, also, might hopefully rejoice to believe that the whole history is utterly false and untrue. But the ultra orthodox *will insist* upon our accepting the hideous narrative in all its naked horrors. They have only recently assured us, in the most solemn manner, that even such stories as those of the unholy massacres of the Midianites and other people against whom the Israelites waged remorseless carnage, is "incontrovertibly the actual historical truth."[2]

[1] Leviticus xxvii. 28, 29.

[2] *See* "Declaration on the truth of Holy Scripture," signed by about forty clergymen of the Church of England, and published in the London *Weekly Times* of December 25th, 1891.

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Another example of human sacrifice of an enemy offered up to the God of the Israelites is that made by Samuel, who "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal,"[1] whom Saul had mercifully taken alive. How all the remorseless spirit of the overbearing priest is shown by this cold-blooded murder!

From the immolation of "devoted" human enemies or of their slaughter in cold blood, to the sacrifice of members of their own families and nation, was not, apparently, a difficult transition to the Israelites. The fact that when they relapsed into idolatry (if, indeed, this was not their normal condition before the great Captivity, as appears very probable), they often passed their children through fire, or, in other words, offered them up as burnt sacrifices to their false gods, as did the nations around them, is referred to in many parts of their history and prophetic writings,[2] but from considering such awful sacrifices acceptable to the idols of the heathen, it is hardly a matter of surprise that they believed their own national and local deity, or "god of the land" as he was described,[3] would be well-pleased with, and appeased by, similar presentations. And here it may appropriately be remarked, that if the word God, as applied to "Yahve" or Jehovah in our Bibles, was more commonly printed with a small g, the word "god" would frequently better represent the idea it conveyed to the ancient Israelites, than it does to us when commenced with a capital letter. Jehovah was to be, in particular, *their* god, the especial god of the Hebrews, as distin-

[1] 1 Samuel xv. 33.

[2] 1 Kings xi. 7, 8. 2 Kings xvii. 17, and xxi. 6. 2 Chronicles xxviii. 3, and xxxiii. 6. Jeremiah xxxii. 35. Ezekiel xvi. 20, 21, 36, and xx. 26, 31. Micah vi. 7.

[3] 2 Kings xvii 26.

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guished from the gods of the surrounding tribes, whose gods were similar and only inferior to their own deity—they were to have "none other gods *before* him" (Deut. v. 7).

Idolatry, previous to the Babylonian Captivity, was the normal religious characteristic of the Abramic race, and indications of this exist in its earliest records. Jerah, the father of Abraham, served "gods." Laban, the brother of Rebekah and Jacob's uncle, had household images, which Jacob and his wife stole when they fled from Rachel's father. When Jacob and Laban finally parted, the latter called on "the god of Abraham, the god of Nahor, the god of their fathers," to judge between them. Joseph married an Egyptian wife, used a divining cup, and swore not by God, but by Pharaoh, his master and king. It is a matter of history that during their sojourn in Egypt the Israelites served the deities of that country,[1] and after their exodus they asked Aaron to make them "gods," and he formed for them the golden calf. Moses was wrath at this, and destroyed the idol, yet very inconsistently, and contrary to the absolute prohibition not to make *any* graven image, which he is said to have himself given direct from God to this people, he afterwards, by the command of the same deity, made for them a brazen serpent. This image was henceforth preserved with other gods by the Israelites for a period of over seven hundred years, under the name of "Nehustan," meaning, as explained in the marginal reference, "a piece of brass." During the whole of this time the children of Israel burnt incense to it, as to other gods.[2] This very idol is referred to in one of the Gospels without the slightest disapproval, though Hoshea found it necessary to destroy it. It is

[1] Joshua xxiv. 14. [2] 2 Kings xviii. 4.

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even exalted into a type of the Son of Man. He, by his death, was the consummation of every past Jewish sacrifice, including all human ones, slain "before the Lord" or "hung up" unto him, the god of the Israelites, as propitiatory, acceptable, and "sweet-smelling" offerings to that sanguinary deity. In the time of the Judges a man named Micah had a house of gods, and he employed a founder of metals to make him graven and molten images of silver. Jonathan, the grandson of Moses, with his sons, afterwards became priests to Micah's graven image, all the time, in fact, that "the house of god" remained in Shiloh. Images were not unknown in the house of Saul, for his daughter Michal laid one in the bed of David. David's son Solomon was a rank idolater, and from his time, to that of Zedekiah, the last king of an ignoble line, idolatry of the grossest and most degrading kind was almost the only worship practised by this self-named "chosen people." The Hebrews, when carried away to Babylon, were inflexibly idolatrous and polytheistic. Most of these perverse image-worshippers, all of them most probably, died there. When two or three generations had passed away, the Jews, born and brought up in exile, had become a monotheistic and more spiritual people. It is evident their reformation, which became permanent in this respect, was begun and accomplished in a foreign land. They got their better creed and ritual, and even their bigoted reverence for the Sabbath, from the Babylonians. Their expatriation was to them, in a religious sense, their salvation from gross heathenism. They never again became idolaters. The great Captivity is, without doubt, the most interesting, the most important, and most notable event in the whole history of this remarkable race.

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Two of the most affecting histories to be found in the Old Testament tell us of human sacrifices to Jehovah, of victims who were actually Hebrews, leaving us without any doubt that the worshippers in Israel, however much the offering up of men and women to foreign gods was forbidden, considered these were sometimes acceptable to their own Jehovah, and propitiated him when supposed to be angry. Let anyone who doubts this, read the truly pathetic account of the vow of Jephthah, one of the rulers of Israel, and of its fulfilment. He is related to have made a promise that whatsoever came forth (first) out of the doors of his house to meet him, after his return from a successful foray, should surely be the Lord's, saying, "I will offer it up for a burnt offering." Alas! the first object to meet his view on his return to his house at Mizpah was his daughter, his only child, who, all innocently, went out joyously to meet and welcome back her father with timbrels and with dances. No wonder his heart misgave him when he saw her, but, in the midst of all he must have felt and suffered, in spite of his bitter sorrow and deep regret, rending his clothes in token of his compunction, he would not retract his word, but exclaimed, in the spirit of the most fanatical enthusiast, the most bigoted zealot, "I cannot go back; I have opened my mouth unto the Lord." And after two months' delay, which the poor girl besought might elapse before he executed his fell purpose, that she might "go up and down upon the mountains," and bewail herself, she at last yielded herself up in an humble and quiescent spirit, more touching even than that recorded of Isaac when his father laid him on the altar on Mount Moriah. A substitute was found for the latter, but none for the virgin victim, of whom we read that, at the end of the

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term she had asked for, "she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed." We have been mercifully spared a recital of all the horrors that must have attended this unnatural sacrifice. It might have been thought that here was a momentous event calling loudly for divine interference such as is said to have happened in the case of Isaac, a miraculous intervention against such a useless, wanton, and cruel dedication of a faithful maiden to so fearful an end by the hand of her own father, but nothing of the sort took place: on the contrary, it became a custom for "the daughters of Israel" to commemorate this atrocious sacrifice four days in the year, and, as regards Jephthah himself, he was thought worthy, in consequence of his inhuman deed, to have his name enrolled among the list of those Jewish saints who for their pious conduct "obtained a good report through faith."[1]

The history of Jephthah's daughter is so opposed to the first principles of humanity that attempts have naturally been made to explain away its revolting termination. But it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion to which the whole record leads us. Josephus testifies that Jephthah sacrificed his daughter "as a burnt offering." Dr. Davidson says, "We cannot hesitate to believe that Jephthah offered up his daughter in accordance with his vow;" and another learned authority remarks "that the daughter was really offered up to God (read here 'god') as a sacrifice—slain by the hand of her father and then burnt—is a horrible conclusion, but which it seems impossible to avoid."[2] The sacrifice of

[1] Hebrews xi. 32.

[2] Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," article "Jephthah," by the Rev. W. T. Bullock, M.A.

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Jephthah's daughter has even been cited as a type of the sacrifice of the Son of God. So far will fanatics endeavour to find a sacred meaning in the scriptural narratives which they will not bear. But there are so many unhappy, shocking, and offensive events recorded in those writings that one cannot perhaps be surprised at the attempts made to explain away their natural signification, by importing into them an allegorical or spiritual meaning. Thus, Origen assures us that even the Gospels contain things "which, taken in their literal sense, are mere fables and lies." St. Gregory, who was contemporary with Origen, agreed with him in his mode of interpreting scripture, and, speaking of the whole of it, literally, asserted "it is not only dead, but deadly." And Athanasius affirms that "should we understand sacred writ according to the letter, we should fall into the most enormous blasphemies."

But a still more detestable history of human sacrifice, if that were possible, than that of Jephthah's daughter, and one on a much larger scale, is on record, in which "the Lord" himself is made a distinct participator. It is told in our Bible that a famine of three years' duration occurred in the days of David, king of Israel, and that this monarch availed himself of it to get rid of some men, descendants of his predecessor Saul, of whom he probably stood in some fear, either on his own account or of that of his heirs. At all events, he "inquired of the Lord," as to the cause of the famine, and it is related that he was told that it was because of Saul and of his house, as Saul had slain some Gibeonites. This answer, invented, no doubt, by David himself, enabled him to ask the representatives of the deceased Gibeonites "what atonement" he should make to them,

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in order to receive their blessing, and, we presume, to induce "the Lord" to stay the famine. The Gibeonites, thus appealed to, and, we can readily believe, prompted by David, demanded seven sons of Saul to be delivered into their hands, that they might "hang them up unto the Lord." Upon this the king said, and doubtless with much inward satisfaction, "I will give them." The unhappy men were duly selected *by the king himself,* and delivered by him unto the Gibeonites, and they "hanged them in the hill before the Lord, and they fell all seven together." The sequel is very affecting, for we read that the much-to-be pitied mother of two of these victims, Rizpah, "took sackcloth and spread it upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night." The execution of these men was simply a political murder, contrived by David for his own purposes, and yet this man also is mentioned and numbered among the select few by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews "of whom the world was not worthy."

A modern writer thus refers to this judicial crime of David: "The seven victims were not, as the Authorised Version implies, hung, they were crucified. The seven crosses were planted in the rock on the sacred hill of Gibeah. The victims were sacrificed at the beginning of the barley harvest—the sacred and festal time of the Passover, and in the full blaze of the summer sun. They hung till the periodical rain in October. During the whole of that time Rizpah remained at the foot of the crosses on which the bodies of her sons were exposed: the *Mater dolorosa,* if the expression may be allowed, of the ancient dispensation. She had no tent to shelter her

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from the scorching sun, which beats on that open spot all day, or from the drenching dews at night, but she spread on the rocky floor the thick mourning sackcloth which, as a widow, she wore, and, crouching there, she watched that neither vulture nor jackal should molest the bodies."[1]

The opinion we have expressed, that David was influenced by political motives in his cruel injustice to Rizpah's sons, is now generally accepted. Thus Dean Stanley says: "There has often arisen a painful suspicion in later times, as there seems to have been at the time (2 Samuel xvi. 7, 8), that the oracle, which gave as the cause of the famine Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites, may have been connected with the desire to extinguish the last remains of the fallen dynasty."[2] Not only was David guilty of the murder of the seven descendants of Saul, but he broke also that commandment in Deuteronomy xxi. 22, 23, which ordained that the body of no man who was hung should remain "all night upon the tree," but should be buried the same day he was put to death. David's intention to grieve their mother by his neglect of this ordinance appears truly malevolent. "It was told David what Rizpah had done," but his pity for her was not awakened, and, contrary to that divine law for which we are often told he had so much reverence, and which he himself said he loved so much, he allowed the corpses of these unfortunates to be exposed to the fowls of the air for many days and nights.

At the termination of these atrocities, and when the bodies of the slain had been removed from their crosses,

[1] *See* article "Rizpah," by George Groves, in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

[2] *See also* Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," article "David," by the Rev. Dr. Stanley.

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the writer who gives us this history has the impious assurance to tell us "*after that*, God was intreated for the land," meaning us to believe that he was gratified and appeased by a most frightful crime and a terrible injustice brought about by himself. And this is one of "the truths of the Bible" we give our children to read, without warning them of its blasphemous falsehood, and which we send missionaries to teach to the heathen to wean them from their own equally cruel rites and human sacrifices!

No doubt there must have been occasional uprisings of the public conscience against the execution of rash vows leading to the killing of human victims. Such a case is mentioned when Saul uttered a curse against any man who, on a certain day, should eat food before the evening. It happened, so runs the narrative, that his own son, Jonathan, ignorant of his father's oath, ill-conceived and foolish, tasted a little honey, having put the tip of a rod he held in his hand, into a honeycomb, for that purpose. The story tells us that in consequence of this act God himself took cognizance of it, and refused to answer Saul when the latter took counsel of him. Then Saul sought to find out the offender, whom he did not suspect, by lot, declaring that the transgressor, though even Jonathan his son, should surely be put to death. So he besought for this purpose the assistance of Jehovah, saying, "unto the Lord God of Israel, give a perfect lot."[1] With such powerful and willing aid, of course Jonathan was soon discovered, and then his devout and conscientious father exclaimed, "God do so and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan." But in this instance the people, more merciful and, may

[1] 1 Samuel xiv.

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we not add, also right-minded than Saul, would not have it so, for happily "they rescued Jonathan that he died not."

The fact that the intended victim in this instance was a full grown and vigorous young man, protesting strongly against his own immolation, and capable of resistance, may have had also something to do with his escape. "I did," he exclaimed, "but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die."

One cannot but wonder, in reading such histories as the foregoing, at the ignorance and superstition that, even in those benighted times, could credit that God would interfere in such trivial incidents as we find recorded in the Jewish history, and even lend his aid to destroy innocent men; but our surprise is much increased when we find such narratives, though absolutely derogatory to the divine character, accepted as true by really educated men and women of the present day, who not only profess to believe these stories themselves, but are anxious for their children to do so also, and would experience much pious grief and sorrow to learn the latter no longer accepted them as revealed records; or truthful, in any degree, except in their most repulsive and inhuman possibilities.

The ancient Jewish mind had a singular faculty in attaching the most serious consequences to the most innocent of deeds. Accordingly, it is from Hebrew sources we learn that the eating of an apple "brought death into the world with all our woe," and the picking up of sticks on a sabbath day was followed by the death of the offender by stoning, "as the Lord commanded Moses." And a transaction which now is very common, and even considered of national importance, against which there was no prohibition, and which had

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previously been done by Moses without any evil result (See Numbers xxvi.) is represented as being afterwards attended with the most frightful consequences when done by David. Thus, we learn that by his taking a census of the people he so offended God, that the latter could only be appeased by the vicarious death of "seventy thousand men" (2 Samuel xxiv.). Is it really imperative that we, in the present age, shall believe this terrible story of a blameless multitude being destroyed by Divine wrath, by an implacable and inscrutable vengeance, for an act in no degree wrong in itself?

The belief that human sacrifice is acceptable to God evidently died a lingering death among a large section of the Jewish people, even though educated above the commonalty, and may have been one of the causes contributing largely to the crucifixion of Jesus, for we have a manifestation of this idea in the utterance of Caiaphas, the high priest, recorded in John's Gospel in which he is said to have declared, when speaking of Jesus, that it was *expedient* "that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."[1] And it is significantly added, "from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death." The tendency of the Mosaic teaching, that there is a saving efficacy in the outpouring of blood, finds a perfect response in the Pauline portions of the New Testament, the total result being expressed in these words, "without shedding of blood there is no remission."[2] And, as the Lord is represented as smelling "a sweet savour" when Noah offered up a burnt sacrifice of every clean beast and every clean fowl after the flood,[3] and the innumerable outpourings of blood under

[1] John xi. 50. [2] Hebrews ix. 22. [3] Genesis viii. 27.

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the Levitical dispensation are said in the same words to have been acceptable to him,[1] so the apostle Paul can find no higher or more suitable language in which to describe the satisfaction of the Divine Father at the death of Jesus, for he tells us that it also was "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."[2]

It was fortunately the case that—in direct opposition to the idea so strongly inculcated by the Mosaic code that the shedding of blood could be acceptable to the Almighty, especially as an atonement for sin and guilt,—from an early period of the Jewish history men of high humanity, intelligence, and of "an almost Essenic ascetism," perceived how futile such offerings as were prescribed by the Israelitish law-giver must ever be as expiations for moral turpitude—that nothing outward of man could obliterate what was in man—that as the cause of transgression was in the will and consciousness of the evil doer, so the reform must begin in contrition, and be continued by a course and life of well doing. Thus a highly spiritual writer expressed the conviction of his heart in his prayer to God when he said, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not require;"[3] and the same, or another penitent, bowing before his Maker, exclaims, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."[4] And God, represented as speaking through the mouth of a prophet, is made to exclaim, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt

[1] Leviticus i. 9. [2] Ephesians v. 2.
[3] Psalms xl. 6. [4] Psalms li. 16. 17.

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offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me."[1] As an effectual substitute for such useless offerings he proposed as follows: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."[2] The prophets all testify more or less, to the same admirable result of true contrition, of an inward turning towards God, rather than of oblations. Thus Amos, speaking for the Lord, says: "Though ye offer me burnt offerings, and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts;"[3] while Hosea, in the same name and with the same authority, continues, "For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."[4] Micah, in the same strain, asks, "Will, the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"[5]

But Jeremiah is the most decisive and pronounced of all the prophetical contemners of oblations and of offerings, for in the face of the positive assurances of Moses, or of those who wrote for him, that he spake by the direct command of God, in the many ordinances he

[1] Isaiah i. 11, 12, 13. [2] Isaiah v. 7. [3] Amos vi. 22.
[4] Hosea vi. 6. [5] Micah vi. 6, 7, 8.

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gave respecting burnt offerings and sacrifices, this prophet gives the most absolute denial to all those implied Divine precepts, in the following remarkable words, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; . . . *I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out* of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices."[1] In these emphatic words does Jeremiah deny the authenticity, as regards its multitude of ceremonial regulations respecting all sacrifices whatever, of the whole of the Mosaic ritual. But so ingrained were the proclivities of the Jewish people before the Captivity for different sorts of sacrifices, both of men and of beasts, that they deeply resented all teachings to the contrary, and "killed the prophets, and stoned them which were sent unto them,"[2] to inculcate more humane doctrines and practices.

We will now give the passage in full, already referred to, from Josephus, in which he tells of the views and practices of the Essenes respecting sacrifices. Having enlarged upon the doctrines, &c., of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he mentions those of the Essenes, and among other particulars relating to the latter he writes as follows:—"*When they send what they have dedicated into the temple, they do not offer sacrifices,* because they have more pure lustrations of their own, on which account they are excluded from the common court of the temple, but offer their sacrifices themselves; yet is their course of life better than that of other men; and they entirely addict themselves to husbandry. It also deserves our admiration, how much they exceed all other men that addict themselves to virtue, and this in righteousness; and, indeed, to such a degree, that as it hath never

[1] Jeremiah vii. 21, 22. [2] Matthew xxiii. 37.

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appeared among other men, neither Greeks nor barbarians; no, not for a little time, so hath it endured a long while among them. This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs which will not suffer anything to hinder them from having all things in common; so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own wealth than he who hath nothing at all. There are about four thousand of them that live in this way, and neither marry wives, nor are desirous to keep servants, as they think the latter tempt men to be unjust, and the former give the handle to domestic quarrels; but, as they live by themselves, they minister one to another. They also appoint certain stewards to receive the incomes of their revenues, and of the fruits of the ground; such as are good men and priests, who are to get their corn and food ready for them. They none of them differ from others of the Essenes in their way of living, but do the most resemble those Dacæ who are called Polistæ (dwellers in cities)." [1]

The one most striking fact in the foregoing account of the Essenes shows, that although they did not object to send offerings into the temple (probably such as are mentioned in Matthew xxiii. 23), they never presented sacrifices there themselves. This appears to agree remarkably with what is related in the Gospels, of Jesus and his teachings. Sacrifice was evidently of inferior consequence to him than the practice of virtue. Twice he is recorded to have quoted the saying of Hosea, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" and to have highly commended the earnest scribe who professed to believe that to love God and our neighbour is more than "all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." [2]

[1] Antiqui. Book xviii. chap. i. sec. 5.

[2] Mark xii. 33, 34.

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As a matter of fact, we do not read in the Scriptures of those extensive slaughterings of animals after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, which are so often described there before that event. The exiles who went back to Judea were comparatively few inr number and very poor. Lambs from this period formed, as a rule, their most important offerings, and these chiefly at the celebration of the Passover. The denunciations of the prophets against "vain oblations" had doubtless considerable effect in diminishing the killing and presentation of the larger quadrupeds. The principal offerings from the time we mention were pigeons and doves. These were in great request, especially at the birth of the first-born child, whether male or female, in families, even to the advent of Jesus. Thus we read that his parents, who were poor, offered a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, on his presentation in the temple, as it was decreed should be done on such occasions in the law of the Lord.

Pigeons in immense quantities were bred expressly for offerings. There was a large trade done in them at Magdala, near the sea of Gennesareth, where it is related there were over three hundred shops which dealt entirely in these birds.

A recent writer, describing the Passover as kept in the time of Jesus, assures us that as many as 250,000 lambs were sometimes required. These were slain, skinned, and opened. The tails, generally very heavy, being from the sheep of Palestine, and the fat, were burned as an offering to God. The lambs had to be roasted whole, and eaten between three in the afternoon and nine or twelve at night. Thousands of fires, in

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special ovens, prepared them; they might not be boiled or cooked except in this manner.[1]

Josephus tells us that one of the doctrines of the Essenes was "that all things are best ascribed to God;" and elsewhere he informs us that they believed every event of life is pre-arranged and controlled by fate or destiny. These ideas are prevalent in the New Testament, as well as fully indicated in the older Jewish Scriptures. The followers of Jesus believed that he was "verily pre-ordained before the foundation of the world,"[2] and that his arrest and crucifixion were the result of "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."[3] He himself taught that even such inferior events as the death of sparrows only happen in accordance with the permission of the author of all, and that the very hairs of our heads are numbered by him. The idea of the Divine selection of persons, times, and circumstances, of the immediate interference of God in the destinies of individuals and of nations; of his choosing some, and rejecting others, runs throughout the whole of our Scriptures. The offering of Abel was accepted in preference to that of Cain, though why God had "respect" to the one more than to the other is not stated. That of Cain was certainly the more innocent of the two, unaccompanied as it was with animal suffering and loss of life. Jacob was chosen instead of Esau, notwithstanding the latter was, to all appearance, by far the nobler man. The Hebrews are represented as being selected by God to be a special people unto Himself, "above all people that are upon the face of the earth."[4] So little were they superior, however, to others,

[1] Geikie's "Life and Words of Christ."
[2] 1 Peter i. 20.
[3] Acts ii. 23.
[4] Deuteronomy vii. 6.

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that one writer asks, "Why should God take such a stupid, refractory and totally worthless people for his people?" And he adds, "God seems to have chosen the worst people in the universe."[1] We cannot agree with this author altogether in his opinions of the ancient Israelites, but certainly their subsequent history by no means appears to justify the favour said to have been shown to them by God, as even their own prophets frequently testified.

Believing that Providence overrules all events, the Hebrews, like many other nations, early had recourse to various means to ascertain the Divine will. Sometimes they sought a sign from God, as Abraham did, even after *his* Jehovah had given him a verbal assurance of the inheritance of Canaan for his descendants,[2] and as Gideon did after the Lord had made him a promise.[3] But their favourite mode of divination, the easiest of application, and which the most frequently met with a supernatural response, was "the lot." The practice of it became a national custom, it was ordained by their laws, and it was employed to determine many important events in their domestic, religious and national history.

The scapegoat had to be chosen by lot. The land of Canaan was portioned out among the Israelites by lot, as is mentioned in several places in the Pentateuch, particularly in Joshua xviii. and xix. The people also went up to fight against Gibeah "by lot." Saul appealed to God in a time of emergency, and "said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot" (1 Samuel xiv. 41). Jonah was detected by "lot," and the raiment

[1] *See* D. L. Clarke's comment on Numbers xxiii. 20, in his Commentary.

[2] Genesis xv. 8.

[3] Judges vi. 36-40.

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of Jesus is said to have been disposed of by the same means (Matthew xxvii. 35). The abiding conviction of the whole Jewish nation as to the efficacy of this usage is conveyed in the proverb, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Proverbs xvi. 33).

The Jewish method of drawing lots was very similar to that pursued at the present day, except that marked stones or pebbles were used instead of paper. These stones, with the names of the objects which were to be drawn for, on them, were placed in a box or urn, or occasionally, as we read in the verse last quoted, in "the lap" of some duly appointed person. Two men, probably priests, stood near, one to the right and one to the left, and each in succession drew a stone. An old Jewish commentator, Rabbi Rashi, tells us that in this way the lottery was conducted in connection with the scapegoat. (*See* Leviticus xvi. 8). In drawing the lots, as above described, one official used his right hand and the other his left hand.

The belief in the virtue of this appeal to God survived in the Church founded by Jesus, so that in the earliest period of its history, when an apostle had to be chosen in the place of Judas, and the choice lay between Barnabas and Matthias, the assembled disciples, numbering in all about 120, having prayed, saying, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship," proceeded to determine the will of God in the usual Jewish way. "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts i. 24-26).

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It is interesting to trace the influence of this original Jewish custom among Christians in after times. Many persons, in all ages of the Church, have continued to believe in its efficacy. Encouraged, doubtless, by the example of the apostles when they selected by lot a successor to Judas, this mode of choice was occasionally used at the consecration of bishops, by the practice of bibliomancy, or lottery by the aid of the Scriptures.

This oracular custom consisted in using the words of the Bible itself to decide the Church in seasons of doubt and perplexity. It was sometimes termed *sortes Biblica* or *sortes sanctorum*. It consists in choosing verses or words of Scripture at hazard, either by putting the finger, when the eyes are shut and the Bible open, on the exposed leaf, pricking the verses with a pin at random, or by taking the first line of some particular verse before determined upon, and thence drawing conclusions concerning the future. Bibliomancy was prohibited under pain of excommunication as early as 465 A.D. by the Council of Vannes, and in the next century the Councils of Agde and Orleans gave their decisions against it. Election by lot continued to prevail in the Christian Church till the seventh century. It was introduced into England about the time of the Norman Conquest. The custom of appealing to the Bible in this manner became so common among all classes, that the superstition was denounced from the pulpit as being forbidden by the Divine command, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

The Puritans often used their Bibles in the same way, and Sir Walter Scott, in his novel of "Woodstock," represents one of his characters, a soldier of the Commonwealth, as unwilling to ascend an upper room in the palace of Woodstock, because "he had consulted the

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Scriptures that morning by way of lot, and his fortune had been to alight on the passage, 'Eutychus fell down from the third loft.'"

It will surprise many to learn that the Rev. John Wesley himself was much addicted at one time to the practice of Bibliomancy, and some of his proceedings he allowed to be determined by lot. Thus we find it recorded in his journal, March 10th, 1739, when invited by Mr. Whitfield to go to Bristol, that he was not forward to do so, and he says, "perhaps a little the less inclined to it because of the remarkable Scripture which opened as often as we inquired touching the consequences of this removal." On the following day he writes:—"My journey was proposed to our society in Fetter Lane, but my brother Charles would scarce bear the mention of it, till, appealing to the oracles of God, he received these words as spoken to himself—'Son of man, behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet shalt thou not mourn or weep, neither shall thy tears run down.' Our other brethren, however, continuing the dispute without any probability of their coming to one conclusion, at length agreed to decide it by lot. And by this it was determined I should go. Several, afterwards, desiring we might open the Bible concerning the issue of this, we did so." The passages of Scripture opened upon are then given.

Numerous other instances are related by Wesley in his journal which show that he often resorted to the Bible as to an oracle, and his conduct was not unfrequently actuated by the responses given to his inquiries. Many other persons have often, since Wesley's time, used the Scriptures as he and his brother Charles and their followers did; nor can we be surprised at this, if they

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believed with Dr. Candlish, that "every word of the Bible is what it is, and where it is, by the direct will of the Holy Spirit;" or with Dr. Baylee, who says of it, that "every word, every syllable, every letter is just what it would be had God spoken from heaven without any humane intervention," and that the Divine Spirit at all times pervades it, and directs to suitable words those who, in faith, consult its mysterious and immutable directions. In the same confidence of perfect reliance, not long ago, the Scotch cleric Bonar assured us "it is furnished with superhuman virtue;" and Spurgeon, that it is indeed "a god of books."

Wesley, in all probability, derived his habit of appealing to the Bible to determine dubious points in his experience, from the Moravians. Writing of these estimable people in his journal, he says of them, "They have a peculiar esteem for lots, and accordingly use them in public and private to decide points of importance when the reasons brought on each side appear to be of equal weight. And they believe this to be then the only way of wholly setting aside their own will, of acquitting themselves of all blame, and clearly knowing what is the will of God." At the time when this was written, the United Brethren, as the Moravians are also called, believed so fully in the efficacy of lottery, that it was not an uncommon event for the wives of their ministers and missionaries to be selected by this mode. It should also be mentioned that marriages formed in this confiding spirit generally proved happy ones, the respective partners consoling themselves for any shortcomings or deficiencies in one another, by the reflection that their union was decreed and pointed out by the will of God Himself. The author's own maternal great grandparents,

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his grandfather and grandmother, and mother's brother, all members of this section of the Christian Church, and some of them preachers, were severally brought together in matrimony by lot; and he well remembers being present at the marriage of his uncle, a missionary, whose wife was selected for him from other eligible ladies in this manner.

The United Brethren or Moravians still believe in the efficacy of lottery. In a history of these simple-minded, devout, and estimable people, published, in 1876, under their authority in Germany, we read to the following effect, as translated from that book :—"The conviction of human shortsightedness and of our ignorance of the future, conjoined with a firm belief in the overruling superintendence of God, has led the United Brethren to employ lottery in special cases. This Society has always been convinced that the Lord rules in their midst by the same means he still employs to govern his whole Church, that is, by his Holy Word, his Holy Spirit, and the dispensation of his Providence. Nevertheless, in many instances where there is an earnest desire to know more particularly the will of the Lord and to be guided only by him, they take refuge in 'the lot,' sincerely believing that he will, according to his promise (Matthew xviii. 19), give them, after sincere prayer, to understand his purpose in this manner. The example of the apostles, who elected Matthias by lot, induced the founders of the old Moravian Society to decide respecting their first presbyters in this manner. The United Brethren of Herrnhut followed their example when they selected out of twelve presbyters already set apart, four super-presbyters or bishops, on May 20th, 1727. Since that time they have continued to employ the lot when choosing a presbyter

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or bishop, or when sending out a missionary. Not only so, but it has become a custom with the leaders of the United Brethren, and one which they consider indispensable, to employ lottery, with grateful hearts, as a mode given to them by the Lord to decide those cases where he does not make known his will in any other more certain way. The decision of 'the lot' once made, has, in every instance, to be respected and obeyed."

The method of taking a lot in simple cases is to put two papers marked respectively Yes! and No! into a ballot box. Then, having prayed, the hand is put into the vessel and a paper taken out, which is the answer to the request preferred. In important cases the process is more varied.

When a bachelor, or "single brother," desires to marry, and cannot decide for himself, or is in doubt about the matter, he puts the affair into the hands of the elders, who draw a lot for him from papers on which are written the names of "single sisters" who are willing to marry. The female chosen for the brother in this manner is always accepted by him without demur as his wife. The author has heard his mother say that her father, David Collis, prayed earnestly that Anna Planta might be given to him in this way, and he had the happiness of having his request granted.

When a number of single brethren and single sisters are lotted at the same time and from the same boxes, it is apparent there will be more uncertainty as to the results, but the decision of the lot is equally accepted in these instances also. The surprise is, however, sometimes very great when the names are declared. We know of a case in which a missionary received in this manner a scullery maid in the Moravian School as

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his wife. He accepted her as a matter of course, and they lived happily together in a foreign land.

Verbal omens are of heathen origin. The elevation of Severus is said to have been foretold by his opening at the 851st line in Virgil's "Æneid," VI.,

"Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento."

Charles I. and Lord Falkland are both said to have obtained remarkable responses by consulting their Virgil's before the civil war commenced. The former opened at "Æneid" IV:, where Dido predicts a violent death to Æneas; while the latter chanced upon "Æneid," XI., at Evander's lamentation over her son.

The Chinese are still as much addicted to lottery as were the Jews of old, and the more recent Christians, and not in a very dissimilar way, to decide their course of conduct. When about to enter upon a new enterprise, or to take a journey, or when in doubt concerning any particular line of action, they visit their house of worship, and there present their request. If the answer required is a simple affirmative or negative, the worshipper drops a pair of lenticular pieces of wood on the floor a number of times, and calculates the answer from the number of times each face turns up. Another method of obtaining responses, particularly when fuller replies are desired, is by shaking a box filled with numbered slips of bamboo, one of which will fall out, and then consulting a book containing numbered answers in Chinese verse.

Perhaps the worst instances in which lottery is resorted to are in cases where juries cannot agree respecting their verdict; the fate of many a prisoner has been decided by it—sometimes by the tossing of a coin, "tossing" itself being but a kind of lottery. Do judges ever decide

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the fate of criminals by lot? The idea is not a new one. "When Pantagruel arrived at Myrelingues he found that Judge Bridoye, after carefully considering all the facts of a case, was accustomed to decide it by means of dice; and Pantagruel fully admitted the humility, piety, and impartiality of this method. If our judges before pronouncing sentence were first to determine the years to be awarded by a solemn casting of dice, the result might be as good as those reached by the not very dissimilar system now adopted." By the latter remark, the author now quoted, refers to the tendency of judges to choose periods of imprisonment represented by numbers which terminate in the figure five or a cypher. In England it is remarked the decimal unit is held in chief favour by judges, and the question is asked, "Do they ever realize what it means to the man they condemn?"

The most distressing corollary, the inevitable result, in fact, of the Jewish and Christian doctrine of the Divine choice affecting mankind, called in theology "election," is the opposite one of rejection, or "reprobation." "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau."[1] And this happened, the apostle Paul tells us, at a period long antecedent to this birth, "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand."[2]

The doctrine of election may be, to those who imagine themselves the peculiar favourites of heaven, "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort," as the Book of Common Prayer, in its seventeenth Article, expresses it. But the dogma of reprobation is equally a source,

[1] Malachi i. 2. [2] Romans ix. 1.

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in many minds, of infinite spiritual misery, and has been so in all Christian ages and countries. It has also been at the root of innumerable persecutions, and of pitiless exclusion from all the privileges of brotherly communion. For poor, blind man has often ventured to fancy that *he* could detect those whom God had purposely created and "raised up," that they might afterwards be cast down and destroyed, being destined, from the very beginning, to be "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." And in such a case, how could it be wrong to unite with God in making them suffer, even before the period of their final rejection? "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? I hate them with perfect hatred," was the language of the psalmist, and has been that of many a Christian in succeeding ages, while the sentiment itself has often been worked out in practice to its legitimate conclusion, including chains, racks, dungeons, and death. It is altogether a fearful doctrine, yet one, apparently, inseparable from the religion of the Essenes of old and that of the Christians represented by Jesus, the apostles, and the early fathers who succeeded them. The Essenes might well confound their idea of God with that of fate, of an invincible necessity existing in the nature of things themselves, but the latter conception really precludes that of a personal Deity, influenced by intelligent motives. It also appears to destroy personal responsibility in man. St. Paul evidently recognized this when he represents the victim of such a God as he describes, remonstrating against being held accountable for his actions, and asking, in a most reasonable manner, "Who, then, hath resisted his will?"[1]

If the doctrine of election, as taught by St. Paul

[1] Romans ix. 19.

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were true, prayer would appear to be useless. Supplication did not restore to Esau his birthright, pilfered from him by a designing mother and a supplanting brother. "He sought it carefully with many tears," we are told;[1] but if he had known how vain these all were, he would, no doubt, have spared them, with deep feelings of resentment—against whom, or what? Poor Esau, the irresponsible victim of an irrevocable fate!

People are often better than their creeds. The belief in the efficacy of prayer is directly opposed to the idea of an immutable destiny. It is well that men's better nature revolts at this merciless dogma, and finds a pleasing refuge from its horrible yet logical deductions, in a belief that a personal and a loving God does hear and answer prayer. The Essenes contradicted their own ideas of fate, by constantly praying to the Eternal and the Supreme Lord of All. Jesus did the same, and the apostle Paul, notwithstanding his fatalistic teaching, ever insisted upon the necessity of "continuing instant in prayer."

Considering the very numerous references and precise particulars we have of the Therapeuts and Essenes, in both Josephus and Philo, it appears at first sight remarkable that Christian writers have so seldom referred to them, as their history, manners, and doctrines seem to throw such a considerable light on the origin of Christianity itself. Even where reference is made to them, they are generally spoken of in rather a slighting manner. We have been puzzled at this neglect, particularly as these excellent people obtained the unqualified approbation of the two Jewish authors to whom we are chiefly indebted for what we know of

[1] Hebrews xii. 17.

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them. An explanation has, however, occurred to us, which accounts in a great degree for this reticence, caused by reading some passages concerning the Essenes in a work by De Quincey. It would really appear, from him, that jealousy of the virtues of these sects is at the bottom of the neglect they have experienced from Christian writers. The fact is not to be borne that previous to the time of Jesus thousands of men existed who taught many of the doctrines which he taught, and lived *his life* as it has seldom been lived since. That a belief in Essenism will necessarily affect our view of Christianity, De Quincey admits in the following words: —"I shall startle the reader a little when I inform him that, if there were a syllable of truth in the main statement of Josephus, then at one blow goes to wreck the whole edifice of Christianity."[1] And he tells us, "The Church of Rome has always thrown a backward telescopic glance of question, of doubt, and *uneasy suspicion*, upon these ridiculous Essenes, and has repeatedly come to the *right conclusion*—that they were, and must have been, *Christians* under some mask or other."[2]

And how does the reader imagine De Quincey gets out of the apparently natural conclusion, that Christianity took its rise from Essenism? Simply and solely by hypotheses without the slightest foundation concerning the origin of this sect, and by the most unmeasured abuse of both Josephus and Philo, writers whose testimony has, in all ages, been regarded as trustworthy and conscientious. Anyone who will read the references to the Essenes and Therapeuts which are scattered throughout the works of these two Jewish writers, will

[1] "Secret Societies." [2] Ibid.

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notice that they are spoken of in the most natural way possible, without apparent design and intention, beyond giving an account of sects who, from their superior virtue, necessarily attracted attention. Josephus speaks of the Essenes existing as a sect of the Jews in the time of the Maccabees, at least 160 years before the Christian era. This first allusion to them is quite incidental, and occurs in his account of the patriotic resistance of his countrymen against Antiochus. We will give the passage, which is as follows:—"At this time there were three sects among the Jews, who had different opinions concerning human actions; the one was called the sect of the Pharisees, another the sect of the Sadducees, and the other the sect of the Essenes. Now for the Pharisees, they say that some actions, but not all, are the work of fate, and some of them are in our own power, and that they are liable to fate, but are not caused by fate. But the sect of the Essenes affirm, that fate governs all things, and that nothing befalls men but what is according to its determination. And for the Sadducees, they take away fate and say there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its disposal; but they suppose that all our actions are in our own power, so that we are ourselves the causes of what is good, and receive what is evil from our own folly."[1] Again, he refers to them as well known in the time of

[1] "Antiquities of the Jews." Book xiii., chapter 5.

It is quite evident if we are to credit the testimony of Josephus at all, that the Essenes were an *ancient* sect of the Jews, possibly as ancient as the Pharisees, who are first noticed in history shortly after the return from the Babylonish captivity. Some have supposed the Essenes to be the descendants of the Rechabites mentioned by Jeremiah, chapter xxxv. 5-10, but their tenets were probably a mixture of the doctrines of Moses and Pythagoras.

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Herod, or about twenty-two years before the birth of Jesus. He tells us that Herod endeavoured to exact a general oath of allegiance from his subjects, but that the strict Pharisees and Essenes refused to comply with his request.[1] The reference of Josephus to the Essenes on this occasion is distinct. He says: "The Essenes, also, as we call a sect of ours, were excused from this imposition. These men live the same kind of life as do those whom the Greeks call Pythagoreans."[2] He further informs us that Herod, in consequence of the foreknowledge of future events which he believed one of this sect had manifested, with whom he was acquainted, ever afterwards "continued to honour all the Essenes."[3]

The testimony of Josephus is too matter-of-fact to be upset by the abuse with which he is assailed by De Quincey. It is quite evident the Essenes were well known as a sect in the time of that historian, and it appears from the autobiography which he has left us, that he was intimately acquainted with them. The following extract does not read like fiction:—"When I was about sixteen years old, I had a mind to make trial of the several sects that were among us. These sects are three: the first is that of the Pharisees, the second that of the Sadducees, and the third that of the Essenes, as we have frequently told you; for I thought that by this means I might choose the best, if I were once acquainted with them all; so I contented myself with hard fare, and underwent great difficulties, and went

[1] Dean Milman, in his account of this portion of Jewish history, terms the Essenes "an ascetic fraternity," and he accepts, without the slightest reserve, the authority of Josephus concerning this sect. *See* his "History of the Jews." Vol. ii., p. 76.

[2] "Antiquities of the Jews." Book xv., chapter 10. [3] Ibid.

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through them all. Nor did I content myself with these trials only; but when I was informed that one, whose name was Banus, lived in the desert, and used no other clothing than grew upon trees, and had no other food than what grew of its own accord, and bathed himself in cold water frequently, both by night and day, in order to preserve his chastity, I imitated him in all things and continued with him three years. So when I had accomplished my desires, I returned back to the city, being now nineteen years old, and began to conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees, which is of kin to the sect of the Stoics, as the Greeks call them."[1]

A recent writer says of the Essenes that "When one was admitted a member of this order, and had obtained the *apron*, which, from its being used to dry oneself with after the baptisms, was the symbol of purity, he attained—(1.) To the state of *outward* or *bodily* purity by baptisms. (2.) From bodily purity he progressed to that stage which imposed abstinence from connubial intercourse. (3.) From this stage again, he attained to that of *inward* or *spiritual* purity. (4.) From this stage, again, he advanced to that which required the banishing of all anger and malice, and the cultivation of a meek and lowly spirit. (5.) Thence he advanced to that wherein he was fit to be the temple of the Holy Spirit, and to prophesy. (6.) Thence, again, he advanced to that state when he could perform miraculous cures and raise the dead; and (7.) Attained to the position of Elias, the forerunner of the Messiah. (Compare Talmud, Jerusalem Sabbath, chapter i.; Shekalim, chapter iii.; Bably Abodu Zara,

[1] "The Autobiography of Flavius Josephus."

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xx. 6; Midrash Rabba, Shir Nashirim, at the beginning, and Ben Chauauga, iv., 374.)"[1]

In reading the allusion of Josephus to Banus we are forcibly reminded of John the Baptist and of his mode of life. In fact, it was suggested by Taylor, the editor of "Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible," that the Baptist really belonged to the sect of the Essenes. Prudence probably prevented him making the same suggestion in reference to Jesus himself. Ginsburg, in the article already quoted from, says, "John the Baptist must have belonged to this holy order, as is evident from his ascetic life (Luke xi. 22); and when Christ pronounced him to be *Elias* (Matthew xi. 14), he declared that the Baptist had really attained to that spirit and power which the Essenes strove to attain in their highest stage of purity." It is only going a step further to affirm, what is more than probable, that Jesus himself was likewise an Essene.

It is really impossible, we think, that two such writers as Josephus and Philo could combine to invent a history of a sect so numerous as were the Essenes, and to describe in full so many details and particulars respecting their customs, rites, and mode of life. Such an imposture would have been impossible, no one would have credited it. Besides, we have the independent evidence of the Roman Pliny, who makes distinct mention of them. His allusion to the Essenes is brief, but to the purpose. He says, "Lying on the west of Asphaltites (the Dead Sea) are the Essenes, a people that live apart from the world, strange and different to all others on the earth. They have no women, being averse to love. They are without money, and dwell in places planted with palm-trees.

[1] Christian D. Ginsburg, in Kitto's "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature." Article "Essenes."

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Their number is increased daily by strangers in large numbers, who, tired of a life of trouble, follow their example. In this manner they have existed for many ages, though it is hardly credible, for none are born among them, so effectual is the weariness of others in enlarging their numbers."[1]

De Quincey does not absolutely deny there were persons who resembled the sect called Essenes. He asks, "Were there no such people as the Essenes?" And, answering his own question, ho says, "Why, no; not as Josephus described them." But the reason he gives for this opinion betrays the secret motive which prompted all his doubts and desires to resolve their existence into a myth or fable, for he continues: "If there were, or could be, then there were Christians without Christ; then there was a Christianity invented by man." And so, because such a result would follow the admission of a fact, that a sect described by three ancient historians really existed, we must disbelieve them all, from a dread of the conclusion to which we should otherwise be led by their unbiassed and separate testimony. To reason in this manner seems like madness, but there is a method in this author's pretended reasoning, which is very suggestive. It is evident that De Quincey fully perceived how closely the conduct and precepts of Jesus and cf his disciples, as recorded in the New Testament, resemble what is related of the Essenes. The mode in which this author tries to escape the unavoidable conclusion, to which many will be led who study the relationship of early Christianity to Essenism, is singular. He supposes that the early Christians, being too few to be safely exposed in their earliest days to persecution,

[1] "Nat. History." Book v., chapter 15 (14).

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which would probably at once have annihilated them, formed themselves into a mysterious confederacy. He says, "In this exigency, and with the sudden illumination which very perplexity will sometimes create, which the mere inspirations of a deep distress will sometimes suggest, they devised the scheme of a Secret Society." He goes on to say, "The Christians selected the name of Essenes for the designation of the new society, that being the name of a venerated gate in the fortified cincture of the TEMPLE."[1]

In this manner he endeavours to account for the existence of the Essenes, making them a mere secret society of Christians, banded together for mutual preservation, and he informs us, whilst the institution of the Essenes was thus accomplishing its primary mission of training up a succession to a Church which durst not show its face to the world, or avow its own existence, and thus was providing concurrently for the future growth of that Church, it was also, in a secondary way, providing for the secret meeting of the Church, and for its present consolation. The motive of Philo and Josephus for writing such a tissue of what De Quincey terms "a fable and a lie," he considers to have been jealousy of the rising power of Christianity, by which "all the fabric of their national hopes, their visions of an earthly restoration, were shattered." To lessen the importance of the Christians, these historians, he tells us, invented the story of the Essenes. This theory will not bear the slightest examination, and as De Quincey admits that at the time he wrote these loose ideas he

[1] It is noticeable that De Quincey refers us to no *authorities whatever* for his various statements respecting the Essenes. The reason is obvious —he had none.

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had "no book, no vouchers" with him, but that he relied entirely on his "memory," we must simply let them pass as the whimsies of a clever but prejudiced man.

One thing is to be gathered from De Quincey's admissions, viz. the great similarity between the Essenes, described by Philo, Josephus, and Pliny, and the early Christians. De Quincey could perceive this, and he was alarmed at it. He tells us in words similar to those we have already quoted, it is because we are here "faced suddenly by a Christianity before Christ, and a Christianity without Christ."

There have been numerous learned men, far better acquainted with ancient ecclesiastical history than De Quincey was, who have felt necessitated to accept as truthful the records which have been handed down to us of the Essenes. Gibbon, in his celebrated history, briefly refers to the Essenes as follows, when speaking of early Christianity. The latter, he says, "Was at first embraced by great numbers of the Therapeuts or Essenians of the Lake Mareotis, a Jewish sect, which had abated much of its reverence for the Mosaic ceremonies. The austere life of the Essenians, their fasts and excommunications, the community of goods, the love of celibacy, their zeal for martyrdom, and the warmth, though not the purity of their faith, already offered a very lively image of the primitive discipline."[1] We may quote here also in particular a modern author, whose acquaintance with everything that concerned the early history of Christianity was most extensive. His testimony is point-blank opposed to the rash and unfounded assertions of De Quincey, for he assures us

[1] "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Chapter 15.

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"There are few points of Jewish antiquity the existing evidence relating to which is more distinct, or more variously supported, than that of the remarkable institution and community now in question."[1] Again he says, "The facts, gathered from independent and authentic sources, are to this effect—that, at the time of our Lord's ministry, and afterwards, there were, in and about Judea, several sodalities of devout and abstracted persons, whose temper and course of life, there is reason to think, were decidedly of a higher moral tone than that of the mass of their countrymen, such as that, if they did not provoke rebuke from the Teacher of truth, they seemed almost to be entitled to the implicit commendation of some neutral reference, or at least the bare insertion of their name in the evangelic record."[2] This writer differs from De Quincey in two important respects—he admits the existence of the Essenes as a distinct sect long before the time of Jesus, on the authority of Josephus and Philo whom he quotes, while De Quincey denies that this religious section of the Jews was known before the time of Jesus; and, while the latter author asserts that the Essenes and early Christians were identical in everything but the name, Taylor recognizes no contact between them. But this last-mentioned writer assumes, we think, much too hastily, that because the Gospels do not mention any allusion by Jesus to the Essenes, "whom," as he says, "so often in the wilderness of Judea he must have personally encountered," that there was no relationship between the Essenes and the first Christians. He tells us, "Christ and the apostles lived in the neighbourhood

[1] Taylor's "Ancient Christianity." Supplement, Vol. ii., p. 62.
[2] Ibid. Vol. ii., p. 517.

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of these religionists, without seeming so much as to know that men of piety were about them," and, consequently, he infers that the former did not acknowledge a spiritual consanguinity with the latter.[1] We do not at all agree with such conclusions. It is possible to conceive many reasons why there is no allusion to the Essenes by name in the evangelical documents, while every reader who has perused the parallels we have drawn between the customs and maxims of the Essenes and Therapeuts as described by the authors who knew them best, and the teachings and lives of Jesus and his disciples, will be in a position to judge for himself whether there is any affinity or not between the former and the latter. Were not the Essenes considered by those who knew them as worthy of Divine revelations, and did not Jesus and those he chose profess to have them? Like the Essenes, did not Jesus frequent the wilderness[2] and practice celibacy, sanctioning the latter custom not only by saying "There be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake," but by adding, "He that is able to receive it *let him receive it*"? Did he not also, like the Jewish ascetics in question, teach the benefits of poverty, the risk of being rich, and encourage the utmost liberality towards them who were in want? Can no connection be traced between the wandering life of the Essenes, their having no certain city, their liberty to enter the dwellings of those who were of their own order wherever found, and the command of Jesus to his disciples that into whatsoever city or town they should

[1] Taylor's "Ancient Christianity." Vol. i., p. 520.

[2] Though the Essenes affected solitude, Josephus distinctly says, "many of them dwell in every city."

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enter, they should inquire who in it was worthy, and that *there* they should abide? To continue to show the relationship which exists in our opinion between Essenism and the teachings and practice of Jesus and his disciples, we should, in fact, have to repeat all we have said upon this subject. So far as the records go, we can discern a most intimate likeness between them, and we think the similarity is far beyond being only apparent.[1]

It will be only just to examine the two or three meagre pleas which Taylor advances with the intention to prove that the Essenes were not the precursors of the early Christians. He asks, "With the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles in our hands, can we really believe that women were systematically excluded from the first Christian Societies?"[2] Certainly not; and if, by this question, he desires us to understand that the Essenes never married, he would mislead us, for Josephus distinctly affirms, in a passage we have already partly quoted, that there was one section of the Essenes which did not discountenance marriage, but practised it with the express object of getting offspring. We shall now give the passage entire. After speaking of the ordinary Essenes, Josephus continues thus:—"Moreover, there is another order of Essenes, who agree with the rest as to their way of living, and customs, and laws, but differ from them in the point of marriage, as thinking that, by not marrying, they cut off the principal part of human

[1] Referring to the Essenes a writer says, "As to their *connection with Christianity*, there can be no difficulty in admitting that Christ and the apostles recognized those principles and practices of the Essenes, which were true and useful."—*Dr. Ginsburg, in Kitto's "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature."*

[2] "Ancient Christianity." Supplement, Vol. ii., p. 64.

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life, which is the prospect of succession; nay, rather, that if all men should be of the same opinion, the whole race of men would fail. However, they try their spouses for three years; and if they find they have their natural purgations thrice, as trials that they are likely to be fruitful, then they actually marry them.[1] But they do not use to accompany with their wives when they are with child, as a demonstration that they do not marry out of regard to pleasure, but for the sake of posterity. Now the women go into the baths with some of their garments on, as the men do with somewhat girded about them."[2]

We thus learn that there was a difference of opinion and of practice on the subject of marriage among the Essenes, but that this did not interfere with their religious unity, and that all of this name agreed otherwise in "their way of living, and customs and laws."

Again, Taylor reminds us that "the Essenes were noted on account of their open and vehement condemnation of slavery, and by their refusal to recognize the servile condition under any circumstances. But the Christian Churches, as is well known," he tells us, "everywhere included a proportion, not inconsiderable, of slaves, and who continued such. 'Art thou called being a servant—a slave?' says Paul, 'care not for it, but if thou mayest be free, choose it rather!—Servants—slaves—be in subjection to your own masters according to the flesh, in all things.'" We think Taylor is unfortunate in the exception he takes to Essenism here, for he shows it to have been, in its purity, superior to

[1] Does the above passage throw any light on a curious and much disputed verse, 1 Corinthians vii. 36?

[2] "Wars of the Jews." Book ii., chapter 8, section 13.

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what it afterwards became as Christianity, for the latter recognized the institution of slavery, and commanded bondsmen to obey their masters, while Philo, speaking of the Essenes, says, "There is not a single slave among them, but they are all free, aiding one another with a reciprocal interchange of good offices, and they condemn masters, not only as unjust, inasmuch as they corrupt the very principle of equality, but likewise as impious, because they destroy the ordinances of nature, which generated all equally, and brought them up like a mother; as if they were all legitimate brethren, not in name only, but in reality and truth."[1]

Had the leaven of the Essenes been capable of acting effectively on the mass of the Gentile world by which it was surrounded, slavery would have been even in those early times abolished, but the system was too intimately associated with national institutions to be destroyed. As a sect in the Jewish nation almost unknown beyond Palestine and Egypt, the Essenes and Therapeuts could enforce their own regulations, but when, as Christians, they accepted recruits from without, "Greeks and Barbarians," a compromise became essential, otherwise they would have failed to secure as converts such as were of "Cæsar's household," and would have become amenable to the Roman laws, which punished all who incited slaves to rebel against their masters. It was much safer, therefore, and more politic, under the new state of things, to advise slaves to be obedient, with fear and trembling, and in all things,[2] and to recommend masters to remember that they had a master also in

[1] "On the Virtuous being also Free."

[2] Ephesians vi. 5. Colossians iii. 22.

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heaven,[1] and to teach that whilst every one should abide in the same calling wherein he was called,[2] all were, both masters and slaves, but one in Christ Jesus, in whom there was neither bond nor free, male or female.[3] Acting on these principles, humane in themselves, and, perhaps, more suited to the condition of the Roman world in the apostolic times than pure Essenism would have been, Paul remitted an escaped slave, after he became a proselyte, to his master, sending by the former a courteous note to Philemon his owner, in which he recommended he should be received "not now as a servant, but a brother beloved."[4]

Such a compromise as we have indicated, even on such a subject as slavery, Paul was eminently fitted to inaugurate. In the first place, he was originally a Pharisee, and had probably not those strong views on the subject of liberty which an Essene proper would have had; and, in the second place, he was essentially a man of expedients,[5] and it was his especial boast that, in order to gain accessions to the cause he had embraced, he was made all things to all men, that,[6] in fact, it was his aim for this purpose to "please all men in all things."[7]

Christianity did, no doubt, ameliorate the condition of slaves, but it never pronounced affirmatively, like Essenism, against slavery itself, unless when it spoke by the mouth of Jesus, who said, speaking to his disciples, "neither be called masters,"[8] which must surely mean "be not masters," and, if so, then Jesus himself taught similarly to the Essenes on the subject of slavery. It is

[1] Ephesians vi. 9. Colossians iv. 1.
[2] 1 Corinthians vii. 20.
[3] Galatians iii. 28.
[4] Philemon 16.
[5] 1 Corinthians vi. 12, and x. 23.
[6] 1 Corinthians ix. 22.
[7] 1 Corinthians x. 33.
[8] Matthew xxiii. 10.

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worthy of observation here that about the time of Jesus a strong sense of personal freedom existed among the Jewish people; and other sects, as well as the Essenes, were distinguished by it. Thus Josephus informs us of one sect, of which Judas the Galilean was the author, whose members, agreeing in all other notions with the Pharisees, excelled the latter in their inviolable attachment to liberty, and who said that God alone was their Ruler and Lord. These men could not be induced by any means, even the most violent, to call any man "Lord," and it was quite understood at the time of Josephus that their resolution upon this point was so immoveable that the most painful death was insufficient to disturb it.[1]

It will be apparent to the reader, from the foregoing remarks on slavery, that modern abolitionists are wrong in claiming for Christianity the merit of being opposed to this institution. The merit is due rather to Essenism, which never recognized, but always opposed, bondage, at a time when slavery was common everywhere. Long after the Gospel was proclaimed, it was still left to a heathen emperor, Antoninus, to make that great change in the condition of slaves, by which their lives were placed under the protection of the law. By Christianity itself, "The abrogation of slavery was not contemplated as a remote possibility. A general enfranchisement seems never to have dawned on the wisest and best of the Christian writers."[2] In the first ages of the Church, in the Middle Ages, down to the present century, Christians have not thought it wrong to buy and sell human beings, while the legal punishments for murdering

[1] "Antiquities of the Jews." Book xviii., chapter 1, section 6.

[2] Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. ii., p. 14.

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a slave has often been only a slight pecuniary penalty. In the British West Indies, Barbadoes for example, as late as 1801, the murder of a slave was only punishable with a fine of about £11 sterling.

Once more the author of "Ancient Christianity" makes it an argument against the identity of the Essenes and the first Christians that the former are recorded by Josephus to have had an objection to oil. The passage we refer to is as follows:—"They (the Essenes) think that oil is a defilement, and if any of them be anointed *without his own approbation* it is wiped off his body." Surely the exception in this passage is against and not for the objection. Dean Prideaux tells us why the Essenes did not use oil. He says, "Anointing with oil was much in use in the East, in those times especially after the use of the bath, and those who were most delicate anointed themselves with perfumed oil; but the Essenes rejected all anointing as effeminate."[1] This, of course, would not prevent them using it on religious occasions. It may be said of thousands in our own day, speaking generally, that they never take wine, and yet if some future historian were to relate that the total abstainers were not Christians, because it was impossible for them under such circumstances to partake of the Eucharist, he would grievously deceive his readers. It would appear the Essenes regarded oil as something which should be used but on solemn occasions, in fact, to anoint with, in a religious manner; and, understood in this way, we can see no opposition to their practice, but the contrary, in the command of Jesus when he said, "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face,"[2] that is, do not use oil daily, but "when thou

[1] "Connection of the Old and New Testament." [2] Matthew vi. 17.

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fastest." So also we find James the Apostle recommending that the sick should be anointed with oil, "in the name of the Lord."[1] The objection of the Essene to be anointed with oil, without his own approbation, may help us to understand the following passage, "Let not the oil of *a sinner* anoint my head." (Psalm cxli. 5 (LXX).)

Oil, in the earliest ages, was much esteemed as an article of diet, almost equally so with bread and wine, and it thus became associated with them in meat and drink offerings to the gods. It was considered significant of divine wisdom, health, and immortality. It was a very ancient custom to pour oil on stones, and the superstitious Greek worshipped every anointed stone which he passed. The sacred stone of Delphi received a daily tributary anointment, and Jacob poured a drink offering and oil on the stone which he set up at Bethel.[2] The vessels and priests of the Hebrew tabernacle were consecrated with oil. "Through this they became impregnated with divinity, and every man appointed to a holy office was made 'a dwelling place' or living incarnation of that divine spirit inherent in his nature (Numbers xi. 25. Compare Genesis ii. 7, Job xxxii. 8), which was thus supposed to be quickened and fed with the emblem of material health and nourishment."[3]

The last objection we shall notice on the part of Taylor is that, while the Essenes surpassed all their countrymen in the rigid observance of the sabbath, Jesus, on the contrary, interpreted the fourth commandment in a more liberal spirit, teaching, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." It is true that Josephus does inform us that the Essenes were

[1] James v. 14. Genesis xxxv. 14, 15. [2] Genesis xxxv. 14, 15.
[3] Mackay's "Progress of the Intellect." Vol. ii., p. 199.

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remarkably strict, even for Jews, in their observance of the sabbath, and that they got their food ready the day before, that they might not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day. But we read in the same author, that on one very essential point, that of marriage, there was a divergence amongst some of the Essenes which was far from producing a rupture in that sect, as such a striking difference of practice would among Christians in the present day. We gather from all we learn of the Jews, indeed, that considerable personal deviations were not uncommon from the broad principles which characterized their chief sects, and we can easily understand that the disciples of Jesus might pluck ears of corn on the sabbath, and that he himself might affirm that this day was made for man and not man for it, without any inconsistency as regards the actual abstaining from work, as such, on this day. We do not learn that Jesus in any instance countenanced work on the sabbath; he simply pointed out that necessary employment was no desecration of even a holy-day, and this view is adopted now by the strictest Sabbatarians, even those who, like the Essenes, cook their food on the day preceding the sabbath, that they may do as little work as possible when that day arrives.

We should never forget, also, that Jesus was a *Reformer*, and was more concerned in teaching the spiritual meaning of the Jewish religion than the mere outward observance of its ritual: also that at the best we have only a report of his words, and that a translation, given to us in quite a traditional form, after the lapse of several generations. So far from defending Mosaic teaching on all occasions, he is represented as excusing it, telling his listeners that it was only as the

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best thing possible, under the circumstances, that Moses suffered the Jews to put away their wives.[1] So on the subject of sabbath observances, we cannot for a moment believe he would have approved of a man being stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath day, which, however, we are told was done, "as the Lord commanded Moses."[2] How emancipated Jesus was from a slavish regard for Mosaic teaching, is manifest in his most wise and true saying, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."[3] We find also that Paul, once one of the straightest sect of the Pharisees, of that sect, in fact, who objected to the disciples of Jesus plucking the ears of corn, became quite a latitudinarian as regards the sabbath after he became a Christian, as anyone can readily perceive who will refer to the passages indicated beneath.[4] It is thus quite apparent from history, that however strict Essenes and Pharisees were, as religionists, regarding the observances of the sabbath, *individuals*, at least in both these sects, exercised and taught a wise discretion respecting them. Both the examples and teachings of Jesus and of Paul fully illustrate this fact.

We think we have now noticed all the objections which Taylor adduces to show that Essenism and Christianity are "two schemes, irreconcilable and diametrically opposed to each other—antitheses in principle and practice." On the contrary, we consider the few points of dissemblance which Taylor thinks existed between the two systems in the days of Jesus and of Josephus, capable of easy explanation, at least we

[1] Matthew xix. 8. [2] Numbers xv. 32-36.
[3] Mark ii. 27. [4] Romans xiv. 5, 6, and Colossians ii. 16.

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consider what we have said as sufficient, while we think the very numerous instances of resemblance we have shown, incontestably prove that if Essenism was not Christianity in its germ, there was, nevertheless, such a correspondence between these two forms of religion as to indicate a close relationship between them. We are confirmed in our opinion, in opposition to Isaac Taylor, that the early Christians were intimately related to the Essenes, from the resemblance between the habits and customs of the latter and those which the followers of Jesus displayed a hundred years after his death. In the time of the Emperor Trajan the Christians had become increasingly numerous in various parts of the Roman world, and as many of their rites and ceremonies were practised in secret, they were naturally regarded with suspicion by the ruling authorities. A persecution followed, and many were put to the torture with the view of extorting confession from them to their own detriment, but all that could be obtained from them is contained in the following admissions which they made to one of the most intelligent of their inquisitors: "They assured me," says Pliny in his celebrated letter to Trajan, written about A.D. 112, "that they were wont, on a stated day, to meet together before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ, as to a god, alternately, and to oblige themselves by a sacrament (or oath) not to do anything that was ill; and that they would commit no theft, or pilfering, or adultery; that they would not break their promises, or deny what was deposited with them, when it was their custom to depart, and to meet again at a common, but innocent, meal." Most of the foregoing characteristics of the Christians in the days of Pliny, and constituting their chief marks of distinc-

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tion, coincide with the peculiarities recorded of the Essenes by Philo and Josephus.

Were we thoroughly acquainted with the laws, customs and manners of the early Christians, we should, no doubt, be able to trace a more intimate connection between them and the Essenes. Unfortunately, the greater portion of the religious literature pertaining to the first centuries of our era was destroyed, either in the various persecutions to which the followers of Jesus were subjected by their Pagan rulers, or else by the numerous sects into which they were themselves divided, for they seem to have felt it a duty incumbent upon them to erase from the writings of their opponents whatever was in opposition to their own opinions. Enough, however, remains to afford us some striking undesigned testimony as to the close similarity which existed between the practices of the Essenes and those of the primitive Church. In addition to what we have already given, we may present to the reader one or two additional examples. Both Josephus and Philo refer to the usage of the Essenes or Therapeuts, of timing the period of their devotions by the rising and setting of the sun. Thus, the former historian tells us that the Essenes would not speak a word about worldly matters until after the appearance of the earth's luminary, but that they put up, before it appeared, certain prayers which they had received from their forefathers, as if they made supplication for its rising; while Philo, in referring to the devotions of the Therapeuts, says that when the sun was rising these worshippers were in the habit of raising their hands to heaven, beseeching God that the happiness of the coming day might be real happiness, and that their minds might be filled with heavenly light. We

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have testimony of an unexceptionable character that the Christians of the second and third centuries paid the same respect as the devotees just named to the material source of light and heat. Thus, Clement of Alexandria, who taught in that city about A.D. 189, writing of his co-religionists and their devotions of that period, says: "In correspondence with the manner of the sun's rising, prayers are made looking towards the sunrise in the east. Whence, also, the most ancient temples looked towards the west, that people might be taught to turn to the east when facing the images. 'Let my prayer be directed before Thee as incense, the uplifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice,' say the Psalms."[1] In the Apostolical Constitutions, the authorship of which, as Bunsen remarks, places us unmistakably in the midst of the life of the Church of the second and third centuries, it is directed that in worship all the people "rise up with one consent, and, looking towards the east, pray to God eastward."[2]

The outward respect paid to the sun by the Essenes or Therapeuts and the early Christians appears to have been an unconscious survival of the sun-worship of the ancient Israelites, derived, probably, in the first instance, from the Egyptians. The adoration of the sun, as the most prominent object in nature, and also the most potent, was general in all the countries bordering on Palestine. The Arabians paid direct reverence to this luminary, without the medium of any statue or symbol. The Egyptians worshipped the sun under the title of Rê or Râ, whence we have the title of their kings, Pharaoh or Phra, meaning the sun. The central doctrine in

[1] "The Miscellanies." Book viii. [2] Ibid. Book ii., p. 27.

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Egyptian religion was sun-worship. The Papyrus of Naskhem, unearthed when the Prince of Wales was in Egypt, is a Litany of the Sun. It has been translated by Dr. Birch, and belongs to the more modern times of the Egyptian monarchy.

The sun, moon, stars, and all the host of heaven, are mentioned in Deuteronomy as likely objects to tempt the Israelites from the worship of Jehovah, and those of them who were found guilty of this stellar idolatry were to be put to death. But, even when the outward worship of the luminaries of heaven was suppressed, if this were ever the case, which is doubtful, it is certain a private adoration was often rendered to them. Job refers to this when he makes protestation of his innocence of such a practice in these words: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God that is above."

Pure sun-worship was probably introduced among the Israelites by the Assyrians. The Phœnicians worshipped the sun under the name of Baal, the Moabites under that of Chemosh, and the Ammonites under that of Moloch. The Israelites, inhabitants of the same country as the Phœnicians, often worshipped the same god, Baal, and sacrificed unto him.

Solomon is recorded to have gone after Ashtoreth—

> . . . "whom the Phœnicians call'd
> Astarté, queen of heaven, with crescent horns
> To whose bright image nightly by the moon
> Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs."

This "uxorious king" loved, we are told, many

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strange women, who turned away his heart. He,

> "Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell."

He built a high place for the abominable and vile god of the Ammonites, Milcom or Moloch—

> . . . "horrid king, besmear'd with blood
> Of human sacrifice and parents' tears;
> Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
> Their children's cries unheard, that pass'd through fire
> To his grim idol."

This monarch also erected an altar for Chemosh on a hill near to Jerusalem, where his Moabitish and other idolatrous wives burnt incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Incense was often burned to the sun, moon, planets, and all the host of heaven, on the tops of high places in the cities of Judah, and on altars on the flat roofs of upper chambers in Jerusalem. The practice of burning incense on the house-tops was derived, probably, from the Arabians, and also the simple act of adoration directed towards the rising sun.

Horses and chariots consecrated to the sun were given by the kings of Judah for idolatrous purposes.[1] The dedication of horses to the service of the sun was borrowed from the Persians, who honoured this luminary under the name of Mithras.

The Israelites, in the time of Hoshea, served Baal, and caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to him. They worshipped, also, the host of heaven. Of Ahaz, king of Judah, is recorded that he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and made molten images to Baalim. He burnt incense on the high places, and consumed his children in the fire. Manasseh and his son Amon, who reigned after him, are accused

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 11.

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by the biblical historian of equal cruelty and wickedness. They, also, worshipped all the host of heaven and served them. Up to the eve of the great Captivity, very terrible deeds were perpetrated on helpless infants by their idolatrous parents and rulers, for we are told that Jehoiakim, whose father, the good king Josiah, had done his best, in his latter years, to reform the evil practices of his subjects, provoked the judgment of the Lord against the people of Judah, "for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon."

Such fearful idolatry as all this indicates must have been exceedingly common, both in Judea and in Samaria, for the Lord, speaking by the mouth of Jeremiah, accuses "their kings, their princes, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem," as well as the children of Israel, of building the high places of Baal, and of causing their children to pass through the fire to Moloch.[1] It appears from a passage in Ezekiel, that it was customary to sacrifice in this manner, as a matter of course, all the first-born of the families throughout the land.[2] It must have been truly a fearful state of society, that caused Jeremiah to bemoan "the blood of the souls of the poor innocents,"[3] that was being continually poured out by every family in the community as an acceptable sacrifice to Baal and all the stellar world. Ezekiel, also, reproaches his countrymen for the blood of their children, given unto "all the idols of abomination."[4]

Sun worship has always been accompanied with human sacrifices. The god Râ, the sun, is depicted

[1] Jeremiah xxxii. 32-35; *also note* Ezekiel xvi. 20, and xx. 31.
[2] Ezekiel xx. 26. [3] Jeremiah ii. 34. [4] Ezekiel xvi. 36.

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on Egyptian tombs and monuments as in the act of destroying men. The same delineations are also to be seen on similar structures in Arabia, Babylon, and Peru.

It is highly probable that in all the burnings of incense, and the sacrifices of their children made by the kings of Judah and Israel and their subjects to Baal, prostrations eastward were made to the sun, whom this idol represented. In fact, Ezekiel tells us he saw, on one occasion, five and twenty men "with their backs towards the temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east; and they worshipped the sun towards the east."[1]

The similarity of the usage of the Essenes and Therapeuts with the practice of the early Christians in turning towards the east in prayer, is too striking to be accidental. It prevailed so generally with the latter, that the Pagans supposed, as Tertullian, who wrote about 200 A.D., tells us, that the sun was the god of the Christians, because, he says, "It is well known that we pray towards the east."[2] Elsewhere he remarks, "We shall be counted Persians, perhaps, though we do not worship the orb of day painted on a piece of linen cloth, having himself everywhere in his own disk."[3]

In the Apostolical Constitutions it is directed that the place of worship for the brethren be built "with its head to the east, with its vestries on both sides to the east."

The authorship of the Apostolic Constitutions is unknown, but Bunsen considers "that they place us

[1] Ezekiel viii. 16.
[2] "To the Nations. Section 16.
[3] "Apologeticus."

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unmistakably in the midst of the life of the Church of the second and third centuries."

This custom of the early Christians of turning eastward in prayer became so fixed, that, after the time of Constantine, the altar in Christian churches was so placed as to look in the same direction as the portals of the church, and both were often turned towards the east, consequently worshippers necessarily had their faces opposite sunrise when they prayed, or bowed to the consecrated elements resting on the altar.

It was customary for the priests of Râ in Egypt to affix on their altars a circular metal tablet to remind the worshippers of the daily presence and influence of the sun. The Peruvians did the same, and in some Christian temples a silver round plate shines on the altar, a survival of Egyptian sun-worship.

In 321 A.D., Constantine issued an edict to the following effect, "Let all judges, inhabitants of the cities and artificers rest on the venerable day of the Sun." Agriculturists were, however, permitted to perform necessary works in the fields, such as gathering the crops and fruits of the earth.

The names of the days of the week naturally recall to the reflective mind the astral worship, once so common, especially the name of that day we distinguish above the rest, that on which we take bodily and mental repose, and which appropriately commences the list of gods by which each, in succession, is called. This, Sunday, or the day of the SUN, was, doubtless, in the early ages of the far distant times, often inaugurated with fearful and bloody rites, such as are so frequently referred to in our Scriptures, accompanied with devout prostrations towards the east. Thus closely are the remote and the

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near epochs of human history interwoven together, so that few hours seldom pass in our intercourse with each other, without some allusion being made to the superstition, idolatry, and cruelty of our own ancestors. We cannot name even one day of all the week without doing so, in fact.

The practice of turning eastward in public worship has continued to the present day. When the Pope says Mass on great festivals in St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome, he looks towards the people, the portals of the church, and the east, at one and the same time. It is the custom in many cathedrals and places of worship belonging to the Anglican communion, for the clergy, or priests, as the officiating officers like to be termed, and as they frequently subscribe themselves, to turn towards the east at the consecration of the eucharist. This is especially the case with the High Church party, who interpret the rubric as enjoining an eastward position on this occasion. It is recorded that even such a liberal clergyman as the late Rev. Charles Kingsley was accustomed for years to celebrate the Communion in this manner, and that he only discontinued the practice, and that with regret, in obedience to the Purchas Judgment, which discountenances the usage, because he had respect to "the law." Few people care to ask themselves why this custom obtains, the minister himself being probably often quite unconscious of the reasons. The usage, however, derives its origin from the sun worship of ancient times, already described; and it is a remarkable instance of the persistence of long-established customs, even when their beginning is often lost in the mist and obscurity of pre-historic ages.

The association of Christian times with those of

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idolatry, is further shown in our English word Easter. Bede tells us it is derived from *Eostre*, the name of a goddess formerly worshipped by the Saxons at this period of the year. She was probably the same as the Syrian Astarté, called in the Bible Ashtoreth. The worship of the sun still survives in the rites of the Easter bonfires, and its great festivals in the yule log bonfires of Christmas Day.

The time of the most important religious festival of the year is even still determined by the position and appearance of the moon in the sky. Easter Sunday is always the first Sunday after the first full moon, which happens upon, or is next after the 21st of March. If such full moon chances to fall on a Sunday, then Easter Sunday is the Sunday following.

The suggestion that the clergy only turn towards Jerusalem in their services, and not towards the east, does not explain either the habit itself, or the universality of it. Solomon, it is true, is said to have besought, when he dedicated the Temple, special privileges for all his race who might in the future turn towards it and the holy city in prayer. Consequently, Jews often turned in that direction in worship, wherever they happened to be at the hour of devotion. Thus we read that Daniel, when in great trouble, prayed towards Jerusalem (Daniel vi. 10), but on that occasion his face must have been towards *the west*, Babylon, where he then was, being eastward of the former city. Several allusions to the custom of Jews worshipping towards the Temple are contained in the Psalms, but these observances of pious Hebrews had no relation whatever to sun-worship, or to the rites which often accompanied it.

Multitudes of Christian worshippers in countries east-

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ward of Jerusalem, as in India, Australia, and elsewhere, still turn in their public devotions towards the direction in which the sun rises, little thinking of the Pagan origin of the usage to which, of course, they attach some religious importance, but which they could not probably explain, if asked to do so.

From the commencement of the Babylonian Captivity, the more doubtful and mythical narratives of the Old Testament may be said to have closed, and the practice of idolatrous worship gradually waned, but did not suddenly cease, as the remonstrances of Jeremiah and Ezekiel abundantly prove. With the return of the Jews from exile, their history becomes more reliable, and can be accepted with some degree of confidence. The writer of the books of Maccabees ceases to deal in the miraculous, and after the last caravans of Jews returned to Jerusalem, an intense hatred of all idols and idolatrous practices became, in time, their most marked characteristic. This change to pure monotheism probably occupied a period of at least a hundred and fifty years, for the Captivity lasted seventy years, and the return from Babylon took about another eighty years, the Jews passing from the land of their exile in small detachments, and at considerable intervals of time. From the period of their re-settlement in the land of their forefathers, the Jews became as fanatical in the observance of their law, as they had previously been rebellious to the teachings of those who desired to lead them to the worship of one only god or God, their exhortations being continually enforced, so it is related, with wonders amd miracles of the most extraordinary description. A learned author thus expresses himself on this most striking national religious revolution :—"The

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devout, and even scrupulous attachment to the Mosaic religion, so conspicuous among the Jews who lived under the second temple, becomes still more surprising if it is compared with the stubborn incredulity of their forefathers. When the law was given in thunder from Mount Sinai; when the tides of the ocean and the course of the planets were suspended for the convenience of the Israelites; and when temporal rewards and punishments were the immediate consequences of their piety or disobedience, they perpetually relapsed into rebellion against the visible majesty of their divine King, placed the idols of the nations in the sanctuary of Jehovah, and imitated every fantastic ceremony that was practised in the tents of the Arabs, or in the cities of Phœnicia. As the protection of Heaven was deservedly withdrawn from the ungrateful race, their faith acquired a proportionable degree of vigour and purity. The contemporaries of Moses and Joshua had beheld with careless indifference the most amazing miracles. Under the pressure of every calamity, the belief of these miracles has preserved the Jews of a later period from the universal contagion of idolatry; and in contradiction to every known principle of the human mind, that singular people seems to have yielded a stronger and more ready assent to the traditions of their remote ancestors, than to the evidence of their own senses."[1]

Intimately associated with sacrifices in ancient times was the burning of incense. The Egyptians burnt odorous resins in honour of the sun at its rising, myrrh when at its meridian, and a mixture called rupti at its setting. Although used extensively and in immense quantities, incense must have been very expensive, for

[1] Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Chapter 15.

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it was composed of many valuable and scarce vegetable substances, growing only in a few favoured countries, especially in that peninsula whence exhaled—

"Sabæan odours from the shores of Araby the blest."

Arabia has always been noted for its frankincense, myrrh, and other sweet-smelling drugs. So, also, was Gilead, a mountainous country lying east of the River Jordan. It was a company of Ishmaelite merchants, trading from there in balm, myrrh, and other resinous substances, who, on their way to Egypt to dispose of their precious loads, bought Joseph from his brethren.

Incense was an absolute necessity in those days when continual bloody sacrifices were unavoidably followed with noisome results. The vicinity of the altars must have reeked with vile and disgusting smells from the decaying flesh, offal, bones, and pools of blood lying about. A small army of scavengers could not have effectually kept the sacred enclosures sweet and pleasant. Maimonides regarded incense as simply a perfume intended to overpower the odious and loathsome effluvia arising from the beasts killed and burnt in the daily and periodical oblations, and thus enable the priests and worshippers to perform with less discomfort their cruel rites. The Jews were commanded to burn it perpetually "before the Lord," and an elaborate recipe exists for the preparation of this holy compound, the unauthorized making of which was to be punished with death.[1] In time the burning of incense came to be representative of the sacrifices, human or otherwise, which caused its introduction. Prayer was compared to it. The Psalmist desired that his supplications should rise up to the Divine presence as incense. The writer of the

[1] Exodus xxx. 34-38.

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apocalyptic vision tells us of vials full of odours, which were the prayers of the saints, and that he saw an angel, having a golden censer, to whom much incense was given, "that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."[1]

From the earliest ages of the Church, incense, whose ignoble origin we have traced, has been employed at its most solemn celebrations. "O piety!" exclaimed a converted heathen, "what, or how great is this honour which is caused by the odour of a fire, and produced from the gum of a tree."[2] Incense is still always used at High Mass by the Roman Catholics, during the performance of which the priest blesses the burning and smoking fumes: "May the Lord, by the intercession of blessed Michael, the Archangel, standing at the right hand of the altar of Incense, and of all his elect, vouchsafe to bless this incense, and receive it as an odour of sweetness," after which he incenses the bread and the wine.

The Reformers discouraged the use of incense, as being without "warrant of Scripture," but it has of late been employed by some Ritualists in their services.

The fact has been mentioned that the Essenes were accustomed to exact an oath from every proselyte who joined them, that they would preserve inviolate all the secrets of their order even at the risk of their lives. It is interesting to learn from one of the earliest records of Christianity that the first teachers of this religion also bound their neophytes by similar solemn obligations not to divulge the mysteries of their religion. One form of oath administered to Christian disciples upon their

[1] Revelation viii. 3. [2] "Arnobius adversus Gentes." Book vii.

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receiving certain books of doctrine has been handed down intact to us, and is of sufficient importance to be given in full. It is extracted from a work by Clement of Rome. The writings of this Christian father are regarded by many learned scholars as of great importance in the elucidation of the earliest phases of Christianity. The writer of the "Shepherd of Hermas," a work not later than the episcopate of Pius (A.D. 141-156), claims to have been contemporary with Clement. The particular vow to which we refer was taken by the new disciple near a river or a fountain, typical of living water, and where his regeneration might take place by baptism. The candidate, according to the usual custom on such occasions, faced westward while he renounced the devil and all his works. He then turned round to the east, while he made his profession of faith in Christ. After his baptism he took the following sacred oath: "I take to witness heaven, earth, water, in which all things are comprehended, and in addition to all these, that air also which pervades all things, and without which I cannot breathe, that I shall always be obedient to him who gives me the books of the preachings; and those same books which he may give me, I shall not communicate to any one in any way, either by writing them, or giving them in writing, or giving them to a writer, either myself or by another, or through any other initiation, or trick, or method, or by keeping them carelessly, or placing them before anyone, or granting him to see them, or in any way or manner whatsoever communicating them to another; unless I shall ascertain one to be worthy, as I myself have been judged, or even more so, and that after a probation of not less than six years;

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but to one who is religious and good, chosen to teach, as I have received them, so I will commit them, doing these things also according to the will of my bishop. But otherwise, though he were my son or my brother, or my friend, or otherwise in any way pertaining to me by kindred, if he be unworthy, that I will not vouchsafe the favour to him, as is not meet; and I shall neither be terrified by plot nor mollified by gifts. But if even it should ever seem to me that the books of the preachings given to me are not true, I shall not so communicate them, but shall give them back. And when I go abroad, I shall carry them with me, whatever of them I happen to possess. But if I be not minded to carry them about with me, I shall not suffer them to be in my house, but shall deposit them with my bishop, having the same faith and setting out from the same persons as myself. But if it befall me to be sick, and in expectation of death, and if I be childless, I shall act in the same manner. But if I die having a son who is not worthy, or not yet capable, I shall act in the same manner. For I shall deposit them with my bishop, in order that if my son, when he grows up, be worthy of the trust, he may give them to him as his father's bequest, according to the terms of this engagement. And that I shall thus do, I again call to witness heaven, earth, water, in which all things are enveloped, and in addition to all these, the all-pervading air, without which I cannot breathe, that I shall always be obedient to him who giveth me these books of the preachings, and shall observe in all things as I have engaged, or even something more. To me, therefore, keeping this covenant, there shall be a part with the holy ones; but to me doing anything contrary to what I have covenanted, may the universe be hostile

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to me, and the all-pervading ether, and the God who is over all, to whom none is superior, than whom none is greater. But if even I should come to the acknowledgment of another God, I now swear by him also, be he or be he not, that I shall not do otherwise. And in addition to all these things, if I shall lie, I shall be accursed living and dying, and shall be punished with everlasting punishment."[1]

That early Christianity, like Essenism, partook of the nature of a select and secret society, seems apparent from a passage in the "Apostolic Constitutions," in which it is directed that during the celebration of "the Lord's body and precious blood," that "the door be watched, lest any unbeliever or one *not initiated* come in."

Even Taylor himself can recognize a likeness, and a strong one too, between Essenism and a later phase of Christianity, for he says, "Only let us lead Basil, Ephrem, Palladius, Athanasius, among the ancient Essenes, and they could not but confess themselves to be at home;" and he even affirms that "if Philo is to be relied upon, those Jewish ascetics were in a much higher moral condition than the Christian monks of the fourth century."[2]

The very fact of the Essenes *not* being mentioned in the Gospels by name, as objected by Taylor, is the reason why some think the writers must themselves have been Essenes, as they partake so essentially of the spirit which distinguished these ascetics, and, writing for those of their own body, it would not be necessary to refer to them by name. Thus a recent author is

[1] *See* the Epistle of Peter to James, in the "Clementine Epistles."
[2] "Ancient Christianity." Volume i., p. 520.

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induced, from a consideration of all the data we possess, to form an entirely different opinion on the relation of the Essenes to the first disciples of Jesus, from that entertained by Isaac Taylor. The writer we refer to says: "The disciples mentioned in the Gospels, there is good ground to believe, were of the sect of the Essenians, for the following reasons:—first, they were neither Pharisees nor Sadducees,—secondly, they were chiefly of the lower orders,—thirdly, the society formed by them, as described in the Acts, resembles closely the societies of the Essenians, as described by Josephus,—and lastly, the name of Essenians never occurs once in the New Testament, whilst the Sadducees and Pharisees are frequently alluded to, and as frequently abused. This is singular, *except on the supposition that the disciples were Essenians themselves;* and tends to the belief that they were the originators of the new religion, under the name of Ebionites and Nazarenes, and the writers of the Gospels, in which they had introduced all their own religious views, and teachings, and movements, and acts."[1]

De Quincey also notices the fact that the Essenes are not mentioned by name in the Gospels, and says, "I would demand of Josephus why it was that Christ, who took such reiterated notice of the elder sects, never once, by word or act, recognized the Essenes even as existing." We think this question is easily answered by the hypothesis that Jesus, as a Jew, belonged to the sect of the Essenes. In such a case the non-mention of this sect is satisfactorily accounted for, as well as his frequent denunciations of the Pharisees and Sadducees. A sagacious German writer thus refers to the absence

[1] "A Voice from the Ganges," by an Indian officer.

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of a specific reference to the Essenes in the first writings of the Christians. "All deep religious and moral powers, or what was left of them in the ancient people of God, appear at that time to have taken refuge rather in the society of the Essenes, of which we find no mention in the most ancient records of Christianity, probably because the tenets of the sect bordered too closely upon those of the Christians."[1]

Taylor tells us that the Essenes seem almost entitled at least to "the bare mention of their names in the evangelic record." Had we not, however, possessed the Gospel of Matthew, the same difficulty which Taylor experiences respecting the absence of any allusion to the Essenes *by name* in the four Gospels would apply with equal force *to the Sadducees*, for not once are they referred to in the writings ascribed to Mark, Luke and John, or even in any of the Epistles. As the Sadducees were a well-known and prominent sect among the Jews at the time of Jesus, the omission of their name from the Gospels we have enumerated, and the apostolic letters to the churches, is quite as remarkable and unaccountable as that of the Essenes from the four evangelistic records, and other New Testament records prove how insignificant is the objection raised by Taylor or others to the latter being an influential religious body at that period. This subject of names is an important one, and deserves a few further remarks. If Jesus had been, or was to the last, an Essene, but rose to a higher level than the rest of his religious associates, or seceded from them, we need not be surprised that those who afterwards espoused his cause, or wrote his history, omitted all reference to this fact. It may not have been con-

[1] Strauss, in his "New Life of Jesus."

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sidered desirable to trace the origin of many of the doctrines and practices of Jesus beyond himself. Coming, apparently, from the founder of their religion, they would have more weight with his followers. Or the absence of any reference to the Essenes in the four Gospels may have been simply accidental, and without design, as the omission of the mention of the Sadducees in the three last undoubtedly was the case. And we must not forget that as the word "Essene" does not appear in the Gospels, so neither does the word "Christian." Those who were taught by Jesus, who accepted his "yoke" and embraced his discipline, were invariably called his "disciples" by himself,[1] while those with whom he chose to have the most intimate communion were sometimes called "apostles,"[2] "the twelve,"[3] and sometimes simply "disciples."[4]

But the word "disciple" was not alone used by Jesus and his followers. There were the disciples of Moses,[5] of the Pharisees,[6] and of John.[7] The term disciple was not, we thus see, distinctive of the followers of Jesus, and as regards the term "apostles," though used in the synoptical Gospels, it does not occur once in the evangel of John.

For a considerable time even after the death of Jesus his followers seem to have been known among themselves simply by the appellation of "*the* disciples," perhaps on the same principle as some in the present day arrogate

[1] Matthew x. 24. Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33. John viii. 31; xiii. 35 xv. 8.

[2] Matthew x. 2. Mark vi. 30. Luke vi. 13.

[3] Matthew xxvi. 20. Mark xiv. 17. Luke xxii. 14.

[4] Matthew xxvi. 18, 26. John xiii. 5. [5] John ix. 28.

[6] Matthew xxii. 15, 16. [7] Matthew ix. 14. Mark ii. 18.

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to themselves the term "Christians," to distinguish them from others with an equal right to bear that name. It was at a city far removed from Jerusalem that the former name began to be changed for a more significant one, but whether in derision we are not informed, the record simply telling us that "the disciples were called *Christians* first at Antioch."[1] But it must have been a long time before this word became common, for it occurs only in *two* other places in the New Testament.[2]

Paul and the other apostles, writing to "*the* disciples" who joined the respective Churches which they built up,

[1] Acts xi. 26.

It is worthy of note here that the term *good*, in Greek *chrestos*, was, in its plural form, applied to the disciples of Jesus in the second century by Clemens Alexandrinus. He says in his "Miscellanies," Book ii., chapter 4, "Now those who have believed in Christ both are and are called *chrestoi*." Christos and Chrestos are very often compared in the writings of the early fathers.

[2] Acts xxvi. 28; and 1 Peter iv. 16.

Is it, we may here inquire, *only accidental* that the supreme incarnated god of the Hindoos is called *Chrishna*. This name occurs in a very ancient poem in the Sanscrit language, called "Gitagovinda, or songs of Tayadeva." This poet flourished before the Christian era, and the pastoral celebrates the loves of Chrishna and Radha, or the reciprocal attraction between the divine goodness and the human soul. "That the name CHRISHNA and the general outline of this story," says the learned and pious Sir William Jones, "was long anterior to the birth of our Saviour, and probably to the time of Homer, we know certainly." Again, he informs us that the celebrated poem "Bhágavet," contains a very tedious account of the life of Chrishna, and he says that "Chrishna, the incarnate deity of the Sanscrit romance, continues to this day the darling god of the Indian women. The sect of Hindoos who adore him with enthusiastic and almost exclusive devotion, have broached a doctrine which they maintain with eagerness, that he was distinct from all the avatars (or prophets) who had only a portion of his divinity, whereas Chrishna was the person of Vishnu (God) *himself in a human form*."—*Asiatic Researches*, Volume i., pp. 259 and 256.

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speak of them as "saints," a term not far removed in signification from the name given to the Essenes, this latter word, as Philo informs us, signifying "holy." Were we to give the numerous passages in which the word "saint" occurs in the New Testament, they would be simply tedious, but we may safely affirm that this was the term by which the disciples loved to be known and addressed. A reference to a concordance will give at least thirty examples of the word "saints" being applied to the followers of Jesus.

It is true the word "Christ" occurs often in the Gospels and Epistles; and, this being the case, it seems to us a most significant fact that in the very days of the apostles themselves another term than that which is in favour now should have been preferred to designate his followers. The apostles appear to have been perfectly satisfied with the term "saint," and this word in the Epistles seems to be the equivalent of the word disciple in the Gospels, the former term being only once used by the evangelists, and that not of the followers of Jesus.[1] The name Jesus Christ had not that sacredness in the apostolic ages that it acquired afterwards, and that it has now. Jesus is only the Greek form for the Hebrew Joshua, and Christ is the equivalent for "anointed," or "anointed one;" thus Jesus Christ simply meant originally, Joshua the Messiah, or, the anointed. The name Joshua was a common one among the Jews, and we find it used twice in its Greek form in the New Testament to designate Joshua the son of Nun.[2] The name "Messiah," again, is not appropriated in the Hebrew Scriptures to any one person. As it is derived from a Hebrew word—*Mashach*, to anoint, or to conse-

[1] Matthew xxvii. 52. [2] Acts vii. 45. Hebrews iv. 8.

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crate with oil—the person anointed was naturally termed *Mashiach,* or the anointed person. Moses anointed Aaron, we are told, "to sanctify him,"[1] and Samuel in like manner, when Saul was chosen to be the first king of Israel, "took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"[2] Consequently we find David, in speaking of Saul, calling him "the Lord's anointed." Before the death of Saul, David himself was consecrated as future king in his place by Samuel, who on that occasion "took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren."[3] From that time he himself was spoken of as being anointed, and so he terms himself in one of his last psalms, "I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name. He is the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his *anointed,* unto DAVID, and to his seed for evermore."[4]

In consequence of persons being set apart for the sacerdotal and kingly offices by the ceremony of anointment, it was not unusual to speak of any distinguished persons, set apart for a particular purpose, as being "anointed," or as "the anointed," even though they had not formally received on their heads the "holy oil."[5] An example of this sort we meet in these words: "Thus saith the Lord to *his anointed,* to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him."[6] Another very appropriate one we meet with in the fourth Gospel, where Andrew, finding Peter his brother, says to him, "We have found the Messias, which is, being

[1] Leviticus viii. 12. [2] 1 Samuel x. 1. [3] 1 Samuel xvi. 13.
[4] 2 Samuel xxii. 50, 51. [5] Psalms lxxxix. 20. [6] Isaiah xlv. 1.

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interpreted, the Christ,"[1] or, as the latter word is rendered in the margin, "the anointed," thus showing that the terms "Messias" and "Christ" were considered as synonymous expressions by the writer of the Gospel of John. We are thus brought to the fact that the term Messiah in the Hebrew and Christ in the Greek were equivalent expressions, and they are so regarded by Eusebius. Thus, after showing that the word Christ, in its Hebrew form, *mashach*, to anoint, and *mashiach*, the anointed one, was used by Moses, David, and some of the prophets, he says, "Nor was the name Christ among the Hebrews given solely as an honour to those who were dignified with the priesthood, in consequence of their being anointed with oil prepared for the purpose, as a sacred symbol; the same was done also to the kings, whom the prophets, after anointing them under a divine impulse, constituted certain typical Christs, and they themselves also were the shadows of the royal and princely sovereignty of the only and true Christ." The claim of Jesus to be a Christ, or "the Christ," could not rest on a real anointing, for it is nowhere recorded that he underwent this ceremony.

We may state that those who consider the Essenes or Therapeuts to have been the original of "the disciples" and "saints" of the New Testament are supported in this view by the opinion of Eusebius, "the very Ezra of the Christian history and law." This writer lived about 250 years after Josephus, Philo, and Pliny wrote, and he certainly was pre-eminently qualified to judge as to the similarity existing between the sect so fully described by these historians and the early Christians. Besides traditionary sources of information, books were far from

[1] John i. 41.

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being uncommon in his day, and the period between the time when Essenism was in full vigour and that when he wrote, was not longer than the period between our own era and that in which Charles I. lived.

Eusebius appears to have been well acquainted with the works of Philo, and he considers the descriptions which this writer has left us of the Therapeuts or Essenes as so applicable to the early disciples of the Gospel that he does not hesitate to affirm they are one and the same.[1] A modern well-known author says, concerning the testimony of Eusebius on this subject, that "it may, indeed, have been only a strange confusion on the part of the father of Church history, when he took the Egyptian branch (or tribe) of the Essenes, the so-called Therapeuts, for regular Christians; still, the connection between this sect and Christendom in its most ancient form is *so close* that *it has always given cause for reflection.* On both sides there is a similar constitution of society with community of goods and elected rulers, rejections of oaths, respect for poverty and celibacy, holy washings and meal times."[1]

The description which Tertullian gives of the Agapæ or Cœna of the early Christians forcibly reminds us of the sacred feasts celebrated by the Essenes or Therapeuts. He says: "The nature of our Cœna may be gathered from its name, which is the Greek term for love (*dilectis*). However much it may cost us, it is real gain to incur such expense in the cause of piety: for we aid the poor by this refreshment; we do not sit down to it till we have first tasted of prayer to God; we eat to satisfy our hunger; we drink no more than befits the temperate;

[1] "Ecclesiastical History." Book i., chapter 3.
[2] "A New Life of Jesus," by Strauss.

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we feast as those who recollect that they are to spend the night in devotion; we converse as those who know that the Lord is an earwitness. After water for washing hands, and lights have been brought in, everyone is required to sing something to the praise of God, either from the Scriptures or from his own thoughts; by this means if anyone has indulged in excess, he is detected. The feast is closed with prayer."[1]

For the information of the reader we will give some extracts from Eusebius, in which he makes reference to what Strauss calls "the Egyptian branch of the Essenes." In the first passage we shall cite, we are informed by Eusebius that Mark, "being the first that was sent to Egypt, proclaimed the Gospel there, which he had written, and first established Churches at Alexandria. And so great a multitude of believers, both of men and women, were collected there at the very outset, that in consequence of their extreme philosophical discipline and austerity, Philo has considered their pursuits, their assemblies, and entertainments, and, in short, their whole manner of life, as deserving a place in his descriptions."[2] The chapter following that from which we have just quoted is so much to the purpose as regards the subjects upon which we are writing, that we shall make several extracts from it. It commences thus: "The same author (Philo), in the reign of Claudius, is also said to have had familiar conversation with Peter at Rome, whilst he was proclaiming the Gospel to the inhabitants of that city. Nor is this at all improbable; since the work of which we now speak, and which was subsequently composed by him at a late

[1] Tertullian, "Apol." Section 39.

[2] "Ecclesiastical History." Book ii., chapter 16.

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period, evidently comprehends the regulations that are still observed in our Churches even to the present time; but at the same time that he described, with the greatest accuracy, the lives of *our ascetics,* he evidently shows that he not only knew, but approved, whilst he extolled and revered the apostolic men of his day, who were sprung *probably from the Hebrews;* and hence, still continuing to observe their most ancient customs rather after the Jewish manner. In the book he wrote 'On a contemplative Life, or those who lead a life of Prayer,' he avers, indeed, that he would add nothing contrary to the truth, or of his own invention, in the history that he was about to write, where he says, that these persons are called Therapeuts, and the women Therapeutrides."

The testimony of Eusebius that the Therapeuts and the first Christians were in the time of Philo alike, appears to be decisive. He says: "Whether Philo himself attached this name to them (the Therapeuts) of his own accord, giving an epithet well suited to the manners of the people, or whether the founders really called themselves so from the beginning, as the name of Christians was not yet spread to every place, are points that need not be so accurately determined. He bears witness, however, that they renounced their property, saying, 'as soon as they commenced a philosophical life, they divested themselves of their property, giving it up to their relatives; then, laying aside all the cares of life, they abandon the city and take up their abode in solitary fields and gardens, well knowing that the intercourse with persons of a different character is not only unprofitable but injurious.' There were at this time, in all probability, persons who, under the influence of an inspired and ardent faith, instituted this mode of life in

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imitation of the ancient prophets. Wherefore, it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, a book well authenticated, that all the associates of the apostles, after selling their possessions and substance, distributed to all according to the necessity of each one, so that there were none in want among them. 'For as many as had land and houses,' as this account says, 'selling them, brought the value of the property sold, and laid it at the apostles' feet, so as to distribute to each one according to his necessity.'

"Philo, giving his testimony to facts very much like these, in the same description superadds the following statement: 'This kind of men is everywhere scattered over the world, for both Greeks and barbarians should share in so permanent a benefit. They abound, however, in Egypt, in each of its districts, and particularly about Alexandria.'"

Eusebius, still referring to Philo, says, "After describing what kind of habitations they have, he speaks thus of the churches of the place: 'In every house there is a sacred apartment, which they call the Sennæum, or *Monasterium*, where, retired from men, they perform the mysteries of a pious life. Hither they bring nothing with them, neither drink nor food, nor anything else requisite to the necessities of the body; they only bring the law and the inspired declarations of the prophets, and hymns, and such things by which knowledge and piety may be augmented and perfected.' After other matters, he adds: 'The whole time between the morning and evening is a constant exercise; for as they are engaged with the sacred Scriptures, they reason and comment upon them, explaining the philosophy of their country in an allegorical manner. For they consider the verbal

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interpretation as signs indicative of a secret sense communicated in obscure intimations. They have also commentaries of ancient men, who, as founders of the sect, have left many monuments of their doctrine in allegorical representations, which they use as certain models, imitating the manners of the original institution.' These facts," says Eusebius, "appear to have been stated by a man, who, at least, has paid attention to those that have expounded the sacred writings. But it is highly probable that the ancient commentaries which he (Philo) says they have, are the very Gospels and writings of the apostles, and probably some expositions of the ancient prophets, such as are contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and many others of St. Paul's epistles." We think that in making the last suggestion, Eusebius is probably incorrect, as, considering the time when Philo wrote, it was hardly possible for the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament Canon to have been written. But there is no doubt that Eusebius was competent to decide how far the manners and religious customs of the Therapeuts, as described by Philo, corresponded with those of the Christians of his own day, and on this point his testimony is emphatic. In summing up his remarks on the narrative of the Jewish historian last mentioned, he says: "Whosoever desires to have a more accurate knowledge of these things, may learn them from the history already cited; but that Philo, when he wrote these statements, had in view the first heralds of the Gospel, and the original practices handed down from the apostles, must be obvious to all."[1]

We have hitherto refrained from expressing any views respecting the Messiahship of Jesus. Some remarks on

[1] "Ecclesiastical History." Book ii., chapter 17.

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this subject may therefore now fitly be made, especially as we consider the religious views and practices of the Essenes had a marked influence in causing a spiritual and not a temporal Messiah to be recognized by many Jews in the time of Jesus, thus moulding all succeeding Christian thought.

At the period when Jesus was born, the Jews, who had been trodden down and oppressed for centuries, were, on the strength of certain obscure passages in their sacred writings, looking, as is well known, to the advent of a Deliverer, one who should rescue them from the power of their enemies, and even lead them forth as a nation to supreme dominion. Such a condition of anticipation does not appear unnatural. Both individuals and nations often experience hope in the most untoward circumstances; nay, the more effectually they are cut off from all visible means of deliverance, the more readily do they inquire for signs of supernatural aid and interpret them favourably to themselves. No doubt the prevalence of a faith in omens in most countries has arisen from such a tendency in human nature. Although the Jewish national hope in a hero who should arise in their midst was extremely animated, it is not the only instance of such an expectation that history records. We read, in the annals of our own country, that for centuries the Welsh believed King Arthur was still alive in fairy-land, that the prophecies of Merlin respecting him would ultimately be fulfilled, and that their ancient and beloved sovereign would once more return to reign over Britain. The expectation has passed away.

"No more our long-lost Arthur we deplore,"

but are convinced that the predictions of the seer, and the hopes of the Britons, will ever remain unfulfilled.

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The Jews appear to have been peculiarly prone to look for the reappearance of men who had been conspicuous in their history. Thus Malachi foretold that Elijah the prophet should precede the great and terrible day of the Lord. The Jews, probably from the similarity noticeable between the characters of Elijah and John the Baptist, believed that in the person of the latter they beheld the former, but the Baptist very justly set them right on this point, if we may rely implicitly on his answers to the following questions, which certain priests and Levites are said to have put to him: "Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No."[1] Some of the Jews, we are told, thought that Jesus was "Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."[2]

The belief of the Jews in a coming Messiah, who should exercise temporal sway over the nations, was so intense that more than one person among them, perhaps deluded by the hope that *he* was the individual destined to emancipate his country and defeat its foes, strove to animate his compatriots to shake off the Roman yoke. There is no reason to conclude these individuals were wilful impostors. Josephus tells us of a man named Theudas, who assured the people he was a prophet, and told them he would, by his command, divide the Jordan, and give them an easy passage over it. Multitudes were deluded, and followed him with their effects. Joadus, the procurator, despatched a troop of horsemen after them. Many of the misguided people were slain, while some were taken alive. Theudas was among the latter. His head was cut off and taken to Jerusalem.[3]

[1] John i. 21. [2] Matthew xvi. 14.

[3] "Antiquities of the Jews." Book xx., chapter 5. Section 1.

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There is a dispute as to whether the Theudas mentioned by Josephus is the same as the person of this name referred to by Gamaliel, who, according to the testimony of the latter, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, also "boasted himself to be somebody."[1] We are inclined to think they are identical, but that a chronological error exists either in Josephus or in Acts.

About the time of the census, made under Cyrenius, Judas, a Galilean already referred to, incited the Jews to revolt against the Romans. He stimulated them to assert their freedom by assuring them of a still greater good, and by affirming that God would assist them. He succeeded in animating his followers with such a conviction that the Deity in future would alone be their Ruler, that in support of this belief they endured the most severe tortures, and no means that could be devised were sufficient to make them renounce it. Judas was ultimately slain and his followers scattered, but not before they had indoctrinated the whole Jewish people with their own love of personal freedom and with a greater dislike than ever of foreign domination, which, Josephus affirms, laid the foundation of the future misery of the Jewish nation.[2]

We cannot be much surprised at the fanaticism of the Jewish sectaries of the epoch we are speaking of, when we remember the readiness with which people in all countries and in all ages have followed persons, impostors or self-deluded, who have pretended to divine powers. We have ourselves to blush for the thousands of English men and women, many of whom occupied respectable positions in society, who, in the early part of the present

[1] Acts v. 36.

[2] "Antiquities of the Jews." Book xviii., chapter i. Section 1.

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century, believed that Joanna Southcott, though at the age of sixty-four and *a virgin*, would bring forth a son, the Shiloh. And no further back than the year A.D. 1838, large numbers of "the men of Kent" about Canterbury believed that the self-styled Sir William Courtney was, on his own assertion, the Saviour of the world. They credited his statement that no mortal weapons could harm him, and they gazed with devout awe on certain punctures or scars in his hands, which he said had been caused by the nails that once fastened him to the cross. He showed, moreover, a spot in his side where he said he was wounded by the Roman spear. Even when Courtney was killed by a musket shot, many of his followers confidently believed he would shortly rise again from the dead! Still more recently a sect called the Lampeter Brethren has arisen, who are said to have recognized a certain Mr. Prince as an Incarnation of God.

At the time when Jesus was born, and for many years afterwards, the Jews lived in the constant expectation of their Messiah appearing. Every word of their Scripture which could by any ingenuity be made to favour their hopes was carefully pondered over and considered. But no temporal Anointed One appeared, and those sectaries who endeavoured to fulfil the conditions which seemed to them appropriate to that character were defeated. It is hardly a matter of surprise, then, that at last some began to conceive the idea that the multitude mistook the signs which should distinguish the Messiah, and it would especially occur to the Essenes that the expected One would be very different to the Ruler anticipated by the people. Thoroughly acquainted, as the Essenes were, with the sacred writings, profoundly influenced, too, as they undoubtedly were, by the national

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hope, they would naturally interpret in their own way all words in the Jewish Scriptures that seemed to favour their own views. *Their* Messiah, like themselves, would be pacific, "the Prince of Peace."[1] They regarded war with abhorrence, their Anointed One should, therefore, teach the people "to learn war no more."[2] Among them were no makers of offensive weapons to be found, even defensive armour was disapproved of by them; God, alone, was their shield, and the Lord their buckler, while the peaceful pursuits of agriculture formed almost their sole avocation. How easy was it, then, for them to believe that under Him, who was to judge the nations, all men should learn to "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," and that nation should soon no longer "lift up sword against nation."[3]

The Essenes, as we have seen, would not be masters. These they regarded as occupying an unjust position, neither did they tolerate any slaves amongst them. They regarded all men as equals. With what expectation, then, must they have read of the time when everywhere "the captive exile should hasten to be loosed"[4] under the tranquil rule of Him whose mission should be "to let the oppressed go free,"[5] and who would, therefore, naturally become, as the universal Deliverer, "the desire of all nations,"[6] or, at least, of those of their own countrymen who were scattered among all nations.

The principles of peace, and of non-resistance, which were so highly esteemed by the Essenes, would cause them to anticipate these in their utmost integrity in

[1] Isaiah ix. 6. [2] Isaiah ii. 4. [3] Ibid.
[4] Isaiah li. 4. [5] Isaiah lviii. 6. [6] Haggai ii. 7.

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their Messiah. Thus, in the eloquent words of Milman, "While the robber chieftain looked out from his hill-tower to see the blood-red banner of him whom he literally expected to come 'from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah,' and 'treading the wine-press in his wrath,' the Essene, in his solitary hermitage, or monastic fraternity of husbandmen, looked to the reign of the Messiah, when the more peaceful images of the same prophet would be accomplished, and the Prince of Peace establish his quiet and uninterrupted reign."[1]

If anyone among the Essenes exhibited at this period, in an unusual degree, the tokens which they had already selected as those which were likely to distinguish the Messiah, with what solicitude would they investigate all the points of his character, debating whether each unfolding trait of his individuality corresponded with their pre-conceived ideas. When satisfied that the long expected One was found, there would be scarcely any bounds to the enthusiasm of the disciples. No hesitation would exist on the part of the earnest, ardent, and believing to recognize him as "He that should come,"[2] especially after such a well-known and revered man as John the Baptist gave in his adhesion to the belief that the tokens of the Messiahship were fully displayed by Jesus. This eminent preacher of righteousness was so convinced of his own inferiority to Jesus, that he was reluctant to immerse the latter in the waters of purification, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"[3]

The possession of one of the most common names among the Jews would not prevent this even being

[1] "History of Christianity." Vol. i., p. 81.
[2] Matthew xi. 3. [3] Matthew iii. 14.

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made into a token of Messiahship. It was true that Isaiah had announced that the Messiah should be called Emmanuel. He whom they had discovered did not bear this name, but that of Jesus. This name, common as it was, corresponded with their hopes, for did it not signify "Saviour"?[1] Thus, we never once find in the Gospels the Messiah whom the disciples recognized spoken of as "Emmanuel," as it is said the prophet foretold he would be, but he is everywhere termed "Jesus." In this instance, as in many others, the prediction does not appear to have been literally fulfilled.

Where the circumstances pertaining to the birth, parentage, place of nativity, life and death of Jesus could be readily made to correspond to what were regarded as Messianic predictions, this would be done. When a difficulty arose, the latter, by a change of words and speciality of application, could nevertheless, in accordance with the liberal mode of interpreting Scripture which was common in the apostolic age, be made to harmonize, at least sufficiently to satisfy minds already resting on a foregone conclusion. In all the four Gospels, in that of Matthew in particular, may be noticed many forced and unnatural adaptations of Hebrew sentences and descriptions to Jesus. But these sufficed for the first disciples, and have done for millions since, whose desire, rather than whose intellect, has been the foundation of their belief. To many minds, however, the perversion we speak of, the gathering together of disjointed phrases, now from one part of an ancient book, then from another, the stringing of these together and terming the whole a "prophecy," making

[1] Matthew i. 21 (marginal reading).

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it applicable to a certain person for a given object, seems an unjustifiable mode of using the Jewish Scriptures.

In Mark's Gospel, i. 2, are these words, "As it is written *in the Prophets,* Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." The words marked in italics are, in the original, said to be "in Isaiah," though the passage itself is not in Isaiah but in Malachi. Had the translation in our version been a faithful one, readers would have noticed the discrepancy, so the translators of this Gospel have taken a liberty with the text, and put "in the prophets" instead of "in Isaiah." The intention has been, no doubt, to save the credit of the evangelist.

It must never be forgotten, in connection with the foregoing remarks, that the students of sacred literature in the days of Jesus rarely used the Hebrew copy of Scripture, but commonly made use of the Septuagint. "In this version," says a recent writer, "Divine Truth has taken the Greek language as its shrine, and adapted it to the things of God." The same author likewise tells us that the Septuagint "was manifestly the chief storehouse from which the apostles drew their proofs and precepts."[1] The Hebrew copy was not quite unread, but was neglected for the sake of the translation, though the original and the Greek version differ in many places, from beginning to end. Thus it happened that a person in quest of passages which might apply, or be made to apply, to an individual believed to have the marks of Messiahship, had a double advantage in being able to consult either the Septuagint or the Hebrew, or both, for the desired proofs. If the latter failed to

[1] Rev. William Selwyn, D.D., in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." Article "Septuagint."

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supply the signs sought, the former could be searched; if the Septuagint was barren, the Hebrew might be fruitful:

> "If stubborn Greek refused to be his friend,
> Hebrew or Syriac could be made to bend."

If all failed, passages could be altered, and "the exact words of a quotation" could be so mutilated and changed as to make them signify all that was required. The following are not to be found in the Hebrew version: "He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew ii. 23). "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 38). "And let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews i. 6). Sometimes there are compound quotations, as in the following, from two or more authors: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (Matthew xxi. 5), pieced together from Isaiah lxii. 11 and Zechariah ix. 8. The words, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil my will" (Acts xiii. 22) is from 1 Samuel xiii. 14 and Psalm lxxxix. 20. The text cited by the Apostle Paul, "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear unto this day" (Romans xi. 8) is made up from Isaiah xxix. 10 and Deuteronomy xxix. 4. This process, once commenced, was easily imitated, and scribes, each animated with the same spirit, could readily add to the pile of Messianic proofs. That this was done is shown by the fact that later evangelical manuscripts contain references to fulfilled predictions, or rather *said* to be fulfilled, which do not exist in the earlier copies. Thus we have in Matthew xxvii. 35, these words: "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting

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lots: *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*" It is most striking that the words printed in italics are not contained in any of the most ancient MSS.[1] So, likewise, the words in Mark xv. 28: "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors."[2] The words in Matthew xxvii. 9, 10: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me," are not anywhere in Jeremiah, but are misquoted from Zechariah, where the words are quite different, especially in the Septuagint, from which version the evangelists generally cite. The Latin Vulgate also gives a different rendering, and so also does the Douay Bible, where the pieces of silver are spoken of as "wages," and then follow these words: "and I took the thirty pieces of silver; and cast them into the house of the Lord, *to the statuary.*" Speaking of the early Christian centuries, Neander says, "At that time men were accustomed to find everywhere in the Old Testament predictions and types of Christ, whether warranted by the connection or not."[3]

To anyone unaccustomed to the subtleties of theologians, the ardour of zealots, and the unscrupulousness of devotees, such a course as we have indicated would

[1] *See* note on this verse in Dean Alford's Edition of the New Testament.

[2] Dean Alford omits this verse from his New Testament, saying in a note, verse twenty-eight is not found in any of the five most ancient MSS.

[3] "Life of Christ." Bohn's edition, p. 23.

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hardly appear justifiable, however sacred the cause. It is, nevertheless, admitted by modern divines that the citations from the Jewish writings said to have a Messianic meaning which are scattered throughout the New Testament, and which are derived, indifferently, both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint, though chiefly from the latter, have frequently been changed to make their application to Jesus more appropriate. Nay, theologians even justify and defend the principle upon which many passages have been mutilated, divided, abbreviated, or added to, so as to make them include ideas, and indicate a meaning which, primarily, to all appearance, they were never intended to bear. The fact is simply as we state. Numerous divines, unable to recognize a literal fulfilment of prophecy in the history of Jesus, although this is affirmed by the evangelists and apostles, tell us that a secondary and fuller meaning was involved in the Old Testament writings beyond their primary signification. And, in explanation of the extensive mutilations and perversions of the Hebrew and Septuagint texts which were rendered necessary to make them agree in any way, literally or figuratively, with the recorded life of Jesus, Bishop Ellicott claims for the New Testament writers a right to make what he calls "an authoritative change in the exact words of a quotation." He admits such alterations were made purposely, the object being to adapt old words to recent events, or, as he puts it, "the change being *designed* to bring up the underlying meaning." And he gives us an express example in which the Apostle Paul himself "alters the words of the original, so as to make its application to our Lord more

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pertinent and telling."[1] Another writer tells us the evangelists and apostles "only explain what they quote or *accommodate* the passage to the facts in question." And he asks, "Who will say that the Holy Spirit has not a right, in any subsequent period, to explain and illustrate his own meaning, by showing that it had a greater extension in the Divine mind than could have been perceived by men? And has he not a right to add to what he has formerly said, if it seem right in his sight!"[2] One more author tells us that "under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the New Testament writers went straight forward, without stopping to notice or criticize deviations from the Hebrew;"[3] while yet another authority instructs us that "When a text is rendered from the Hebrew into the Septuagint and quoted from thence into the New Testament, it is to be regarded as *legitimated* by apostolic inspiration, even if it should differ from the Hebrew reading."[4]

It seems to follow, from the mode of interpretation sanctioned by such writers as have just been cited, that where the Hebrew differs from the Septuagint quotations of the New Testament the value of the Hebrew originals is altered, and, in some instances, rendered null. Wherein, then, it may be asked, consists the inspiration of such parts of the Old Testament? Surenhusius, a learned professor of Hebrew at Amsterdam, published a treatise on this subject in 1713, in which he gives a

[1] *See* his contribution to "Aids to Faith."

[2] *See* Dr. Adam Clarke's notes on Matthew ii. 23, in his "Commentary."

[3] "A New Introduction to the Study of the Bible," by E. P. Barrows, D.D., 1869.

[4] "The Book of Prophecy," by George Smith, LL.D., 1866.

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number of rules collected with great pains from the Talmud and Rabbins, which he applies to explain and justify all the quotations used from the Old Testament in the New, which bring to our recollection the words of one of our poets—

> "They have hard words ready, to show why,
> And tell what rules they do it by."

Some of the rules collected by Surenhusius are as follows:—

"Changing the letters, as done by St. Paul, Romans ix. 33; 1 Corinthians ix. 9, &c.; Hebrew viii. 9; Hebrew x. 5."

"Adding some letters and retrenching others."

"Transferring words and letters."

"Dividing one word into two."

"Adding other words to make the sense more complete."

"Changing the original order of the words."

"Changing the original order and adding other words."

"Changing the original order, and adding and retrenching words," which he maintains is a method often used by St. Paul.[1]

"These rules," says a candid writer, "speak for themselves most significantly; for what is there that cannot be proved from the Old Testament or any other book, yea, from Euclid's Elements! or even an old almanac! by the help of "altering words and sentences; adding; retrenching; and transposing, and cutting words in two, as is stated above by a learned and good man, and

[1] The above Rules, with additions, will be found in Dr. Adam Clarke's "Commentary."

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sincere Christian, who found out, and brought forward these rules, as the best means of getting the authors of the New Testament out of a difficulty which had long shocked and grieved their best friends."[1] The idea of this author of a life of Jesus being compiled and proved from other books than those of Scripture, is not so far fetched as might at first appear, for it is said that by adopting a somewhat similar method as that used by the New Testament writers in their quotations from the Old Testament, and made applicable to Jesus, the Empress Eudoxia wrote out a history of Jesus in verses, *put together* and borrowed out of—HOMER! and that Proba Falconia compiled a similar book in verses, and words taken out of—VIRGIL.

This is a very serious subject, and one to be treated as such. We have read of "the unpardonable sin" against the Holy Ghost (Matthew xxxi. 32). Surely, men like Bishop Ellicott, Dr. Adam Clarke, Dr. G. Smith, Dr. E. P. Barrows, and similar apologists for the fact that the passages of the Old Testament are often misquoted in the New, or that words, not to be found at all in the former, are sometimes cited as though really there, and are said by them to be examples of the completion of prophecies, come perilously near to *that* SIN, in ascribing the application of these apparently irrelevant portions of Scripture, or of words not there at all, to the direct influence of the Holy Ghost! It is said by them that he "legitimated" them, made "an authoritative change in the exact words of a quotation," and brought "up the underlaying meaning," never to

[1] "The Grounds of Christianity examined, by comparing the New Testament with the Old," by George Bethune English, A.M.

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be suspected or imagined by simple and truthful minds. Such jesuitical casuistry, such unwarrantable accommodation of ancient records to after events with which they appear to have not the most remote connection; such forging and alteration of words and meanings to sustain any cause whatever, are calculated to call down upon the supporters and advocates of such teaching the unmitigated scorn and disapprobation of all honest men, more especially as they are not afraid to ascribe them, as does Bishop Ellicott, to the "very Eternal Spirit of God." Is not such language sinful? Were the Divine Spirit to reply to this bishop, we can readily believe it would be in the words of old, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee."

A learned, sincere, and conscientious authority on Scripture, expresses, in suitable language, an absolute repudiation of such unworthy and dishonourable doctrines as those of the last-mentioned theologians. He says, "The Jews may be indulged in their idle speculations, and the vainglory of discovering seventy sentences in a single period; but that an upright and impartial lover of the truth, and even persons commissioned by the Deity to preach it to mankind, should have recourse to such miserable artifices, is a matter inconceivable to sound reason, which must ever retain the privilege of deciding on revelation itself. Whatever term be adopted to apologize for this mode of reasoning, whether we term it Œconomy with the Fathers, or Medrash with the Jews, I am unable to comprehend how a set of writings, in which arguments of this nature are admitted, can be thought to proceed from the Deity, and how those who allow the principle can reconcile false-

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hood with divine inspiration. All errors are proofs against the divinity of the book which contains them; but none are so inexcusable as an author's not understanding his own writings; yet it follows, from the admission of the above premises, that the Deity, speaking in the New Testament, misunderstood the meaning of the Old."[1]

If the Essenes allowed themselves the latitude of application which the evangelists and apostles manifest in the use of the Jewish Scripture, especially the Septuagint version, they would have little difficulty in finding some individual amongst their pious and self-denying community to whom they might apply many detached and descriptive passages. How eagerly would his words now be listened to, how carefully treasured up! The most ordinary principles of morality, the most familiar precepts of religion, would gather increased importance when enunciated by him, and

"Truth from his lips prevail with doubled sway."

It is well known that all the teachings contained in the Sermon on the Mount were more or less familiar to the Jews before the time of Jesus. Hillel, a Babylonian rabbi, called the second Ezra, or the restorer of the Law, who settled in Jerusalem about 36 B.C., was the author of sayings analogous to those of Jesus. This teacher had at one time as many as a thousand pupils. He taught, as a cardinal doctrine, the necessity of gentleness, "shewing all meekness to all men." He instructed his disciples "when reviled not to revile again." On one occasion a man laid a wager that he would excite the Rabbi to anger. He found Hillel out, teased him

[1] "Introduction to the New Testament," by Michaelis. Vol. i., p. 205.

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with silly questions, and, finding this did not disturb his meekness, began to insult him. Hillel answered him with gentleness, treated him with kindness, and uttered not a word in reply to his opprobrious language. When asked by a heathen to express by one sentence the whole law, Hillel replied, "Whatsoever thou wouldst not that a man should do to thee, do not thou to him: this is the whole law." The saying recorded of Jesus, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets," is but an extension of Hillel's maxim, and was perhaps suggested by it.

It was among men taught by Hillel that Jesus was brought up. Need we, then, be surprised to find that the precepts of the latter correspond with those of the former, or that the words of Jesus have been transmitted to us in a discourse which embodies maxims well known to his countrymen long before his advent? Morality, after all, can never be invented; it can only be taught and disseminated. Its obligations are always the same, and perhaps there have been some men in every age who have been influenced by its highest principles, and who have fulfilled its most ennobling and self-denying requirements.

In such a condition of national expectation as existed in the time of Jesus, we should not have been surprised, after reading the history of Theudas and of Judas the Galilean, to find that a distinct and reliable record existed, relating that some Essene, supported by the opinion and suffrages of his brethren, also announced himself as the Messiah. We should have looked upon such a narrative as very probable indeed. What we might have looked for we seem actually to find in the

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New Testament. We read there of one who was compelled, as it were, by his associates, to stand forth as the Messiah, and to assume that character. John, we are told, pointed him out to his disciples.[1] One of these, Andrew, finding his brother Simon, accosts him with these words, "We have found the Messiah."[2] In the mind of a person selected by the suffrages of his co-religionists as the Messiah, a conviction in his own Messiahship might easily alternate with doubt and uncertainty. When the latter prevailed, it would be by no means unlikely for him to put to one or more of his followers the question, "Whom do men say that I the son of man am?"[3] In the case of Jesus the reply was probably not what he expected, for it was as follows: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." This answer did not encourage him, so he makes a direct appeal to his disciples, and asks them, "But whom say *ye* that I am?" This inquiry evoked from Peter the confident and memorable assertion, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Can we be surprised that when Jesus heard this that he became unconcerned as to what the world without said of him, unable, as they were, to recognize him as the Messiah? Filled with joy at the announcement of Peter, he exclaimed in reply, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."[4]

Jesus does not appear to have realized the extent of his mission, as afterwards understood by the evangelists and apostles, for although we read in one of the Gospels[5]

[1] John i. 36. [2] John i. 41. [3] Matthew xvi. 13.
[4] Matthew xvi. 17. [5] Luke ii. 32.

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that even in infancy he was recognized as the future light of the Gentiles, he himself declared that he was not sent save to the lost children of the house of Israel,[1] and it is even said that he instructed the twelve apostles whom he had chosen not to go in the way of the Gentiles, but to seek out the lost and unknown sheep of the dispersed Ten Tribes.[2]

The Essenes were strenuous denouncers of evil doers and of evil works, and we need hardly point out fully, how continually Jesus resembled them in this respect. Dean Milman has thought it necessary to combat such an idea, with what success our readers can judge from the following passage from his "History of Christianity." Speaking of Jesus, he says: "He was scarcely more congenial to the severe and ascetic practices of the Essenes, than to the fierce followers of the Galilean Judas. Though the Essene might admire the exquisite purity of his moral teaching, and the uncompromising firmness with which he repressed the vices of all ranks and parties; however he might be prepared for the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and the substitution of the religion of the heart for that of the prevalent outward forms, on his own side he was too closely bound by his own monastic rules; his whole existence was recluse and contemplative. His religion was altogether unfitted for aggression, so that, however apparently it might coincide with Christianity in some material points, in fact its vital system was repugnant to that of the new faith." [3]

In the foregoing quotation we have the plain admission

[1] Matthew xv. 24. [2] Matthew x. 6.
[3] "History of Christianity:" Vol. i., p. 275.

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that in "some material points" there was a coincidence between Essenism and Christianity; and in reference to the former religion not being adapted for aggression, Dean Milman evidently forgot what Josephus records, viz. that every Essene, when he was admitted into full union with his community at the end of his long noviciate, had to bind himself by tremendous oaths to "hate the wicked," and "to reprove those that tell lies." To do the latter alone would require the constant exercise of a very aggressive spirit, such, in fact, as Jesus often exhibited, especially if he was in the habit of using such language as the following: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."[1]

If we accept the outlines of the life of Jesus given in the Gospels as in the main correct, we cannot but be struck with the fact that his favourite title, when speaking of himself, was "the son of man." He required his disciples not to announce him as the Messiah,[2] though their opinion of him was probably known. His own brothers did not believe in him,[3] while on one occasion, it is said, his friends went out with the intention of arresting him, believing him to be deranged.[4] But while neither the world nor his relations accepted him as the Christ, and though many who had at one time followed him ceased to believe and walked no more with him,[5] the twelve remained faithful,

[1] John viii. 44. [2] Matthew xvi. 20. [3] John vii. 5.
[4] Mark iii. 21. [5] John vi. 66.

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and once more Peter, as their mouth-piece, in response to his inquiry, "Will ye also go away?" exclaimed, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."[1]

In a person partially or fully persuaded that the Messianic prophecies must needs be fulfilled in him, there would be an almost unconscious effort to adapt himself, as far as possible, to what he understood to be their import, and to satisfy the conditions they seemed to foreshadow. In such a case we might reasonably expect to find an occasional want of accommodation between the predictions and their alleged accomplishment, similar to what is clearly discernible in the Gospel narratives of Jesus. If the idea became entertained that a violent death was the fitting termination to the Messianic mission, not only would such a death not be avoided, but it would even be sought, and those means adopted to bring it about which would most likely be successful. None can deny that the course pursued by Jesus was one calculated to exasperate his countrymen, and he might, therefore, without much risk of making a mistake, announce to his disciples that men would betray and kill him.

Dangers, as a matter of course, began gradually to gather around Jesus. Many were offended with him, and, when he spoke to them in parables concerning the kingdom of heaven, they would remember his origin and his former occupation, saying, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us?"[2]

[1] John vi. 67-69.

[2] Matthew xiii. 55 56.

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He gave the greatest offence to the scribes and pharisees, whose hypocrisy he reproved, while they retaliated by denying his Messiahship. The idea which the Jews generally entertained that Jesus considered himself equal with God,[1] made them regard him as a blasphemer, and, when distinctly charged with this pretension, instead of either denying it, or absolutely and unmistakingly affirming it, he answered their indignant, and, from their standpoint, just accusations, in words which read to some impartial persons very much like designed equivocations.[2] It is quite evident that the Jews were puzzled by the claims of Jesus, and could not understand whether he wished to be regarded as the Messiah or not. No wonder, therefore, that on one occasion they are recorded to have asked him, almost imploringly, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."[3]

Any person might have foreseen the result. Jesus himself anticipated it, and although he persevered in the course which he had commenced, the prospect of future suffering filled him with sorrow. He even prayed that, if it was the will of God, the cup might be taken from him. The final moment at last arrived, and then, in the agony of his mental and bodily suffering, the cry, so hopeless and despairing, was extorted from him: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Let us be glad to believe that these were not the final words of Jesus. Once more his confidence revived, and his last cry, as he turned to God, was, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."[4]

Then, says Matthew, in describing the crucifixion,

[1] John x. 30.
[2] John x. 32-36.
[3] John x. 24.
[4] Luke xxiii. 46.

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that mournful event, big with the destinies of untold millions of our race, "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."[1] This account is literal and exact to a degree, but Farrar evidently finds it too severe a trial of "his belief," for this is how he refers to it: "An earthquake shook the earth and split the rocks, and as it rolled away from their places the great stones which closed and covered the cavern sepulchres of the Jews, so it seemed to the imagination of many to have disimprisoned the spirits of the dead, and to have filled the air with ghostly visitants, who, after Christ had risen, appeared to linger in the holy city."[2] Thus does Farrar speak of one of the most precise accounts of what took place after the crucifixion, as only "the imagination of many," as far as the risen bodies of the saints are concerned and their appearance in Jerusalem. He is quite willing to believe in *one* resurrection, but not in more than one, though both events are recorded in the same Gospel. And yet, after this manifestation of his own unbelief, he has the hardihood to term the opinion of the Jews, expressed at that time, that the body of Jesus was stolen from the sepulchre, "one of the blaspheming follies which was repeated and amplified twelve centuries afterwards in the Toldôth Jeshu."[3] Nevertheless, this divine disclaims "a right to scathe the rejector of miracles by abuse and anathemas."[4] What does he term the expression "blaspheming follies," we should like to know? And where is his own faith in

[1] Matthew xxvii. 51-53.
[2] "Life of Christ," p. 450.
[3] "Life of Christ," p. 459.
[4] Ibid., p. 79.

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the miraculous resurrection of "the saints?" Great confusion is apparent in the Gospel accounts of *the time* of the crucifixion. The three first evangelists make it occur on the day *after* the Passover. In the Gospel of John the execution of Jesus is made to take place *before* that event. Innumerable attempts have been made to explain this discrepancy, but without success. Compare Matthew xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12; and Luke xxii. 7, with John xviii. 28.

We have seen how Jesus is said to have died, but his history ends not here. Disappointed as the disciples were at the reign of peace they had anticipated not being inaugurated, frightened by the cruelties inflicted on Jesus, and dismayed by his apparent death, they would not part with their hopes. These simply took another form. Jesus would rise again. The Gospels tell us he did so. But when we come to compare the various relations we have of the re-appearance and ascension of Jesus, what are we to think? No two histories of these events agree or can be made to agree. "Theologians," says a recent and well-known author, "have noticed no less than ten discrepancies in the Evangelic narrative."[1] So environed with doubt, in fact, is everything connected with Jesus, that even his decease while on the cross is considered by many to be a matter of great uncertainty. One of the first of modern English historians, a man accustomed carefully to weigh transmitted testimony, and to separate in written records the probable from the improbable, has affirmed, respecting the death of Jesus at the hands of the Jews and Romans, that "there is no evidence which a jury could admit that he was ever actually dead. So

[1] "The Picture of Jesus," by the Rev. H. R. Haweis, M.A., p. 264.

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unusual was it for persons crucified to die so soon, that Pilate, we are told, 'marvelled.'"[1]

Death by crucifixion was a fearful and most painful punishment, and had long been in use as such by both the Persians and Carthaginians before it was adopted by the Romans. The ordinary cross was of rough construction, and not of that elaborate description so often represented in the mediæval paintings of the artists of the Middle Ages, neither was it of the great size they sometimes delineate. In some of their pictures of the crucifixion of Jesus the cross is shown so tall as to require a ladder to be placed against it, when his body was being taken down. This does not correspond with the Gospel statement that he was made to bear his own cross. Sawn and squared timber was far too expensive in those days to be used for the crosses on which to place criminals and rebellious slaves, especially when large numbers were not unfrequently put to death on them at one time. Ordinary wood in a rough state had to serve instead, and was often so light that the malefactors had themselves to carry their instrument of punishment to the place of execution. The horizontal bar forming the cross was sometimes only tied to the upright post by a strong cord, which material was occasionally used likewise as an extra support for the victim fastened on the pieces of timber. There was generally a rough peg of wood let into the cross to form a kind of seat, intended merely, however, to bear up the body, and to prevent its weight tearing the hands from the cruel nails. Those condemned to be crucified were not uncommonly fastened to the cross while it lay flat on the ground. The hands were secured with great

[1] Froude's "Plea for Free Discussion of Theological Difficulties."

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nails. The legs were bent till the soles of the feet touched the perpendicular upright, to which they were fixed also by a big nail. The feet, as a rule, were lapped one over the other. Then the whole fixture, with the unhappy being upon it, was raised, and suddenly jerked into the hole prepared to receive it, without regard to the extra indescribable agony this would cause to the unfortunate one upon it. When planted in the ground the heads of the crucified were consequently and generally not much above those of the spectators gathered to witness the melancholy and fatal ceremony.

The lowness of a cross would greatly facilitate the removal of a body, living or dead, from it, when this was permitted or became necessary. The nails in both hands and feet could then, in all ordinary cases, be readily extracted by a person standing on the ground. In some instances, it can readily be conceived, they were only slightly driven into the wood. Perhaps this was even so at the crucifixion of Jesus.

In answer to the question, "Did Jesus die on the cross?" it has been suggested that the crucifixion of Jesus was intended merely as an exposure, to frighten him out of what was considered a delusion, as there were so many impostors going about at that time, all aspirants to the Messiahship. And it is said this view is corroborated by Pilate declaring that he found no fault in him, and his desire to liberate him; by the giving him vinegar to quench his thirst; by the alarm of the guards when he fainted, and by their running to report the matter to the Procurator. And, lastly, by their not proceeding to the deathblow by breaking his legs, and by his being taken down from the cross after being there only a few hours. "Nothing," says a

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writer on this subject, "is more probable than that fatigue, loss of blood, and mental anguish, should have produced extreme exhaustion and syncope—in which state Jesus was placed at the disposal of his friends, who, after rubbing the body with aromatics (the very best means of restoring animation), had left him to his repose in the quiet of the sepulchre. On his recovering from this state of suspended animation, he was privately removed by his friends during the night, and as he left word to his disciples, 'After that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee,' he most probably returned thither." [1]

In the last chapter of Mark's Gospel we have an account of the two Marys going to the sepulchre, and there meeting a young man, who told them not to be afraid, that Jesus was risen, and who, after showing where their beloved friend had lain, instructed them to go and tell the disciples that he had gone into Galilee. Mary Magdalene shortly afterwards, we are informed, saw Jesus himself, and told the disciples that "he was alive." [2]

There is certainly no improbability in the idea that Jesus survived his crucifixion, for he was only *three hours* on the cross, and instances have occurred of complete recovery when persons have been removed from their agonising position in time. Thus Josephus tells us that after the siege of Jerusalem, when numbers of Jews were crucified by Titus, he recognized among them three of his friends or former acquaintances. At his earnest solicitation the Roman general ordered them to be taken down. Two of them died under the physician's

[1] "A Voice from the Ganges." [2] Mark xvi. 1-11.

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care, but the third was restored to health.[1] It is probable that these men were on the cross many hours longer than Jesus was.

"The cruelty of death by crucifixion depended very much upon its lingering character. If there were a support for the weight of the body, as not unfrequently was the practice, the pain during the first hours of the infliction was not, necessarily, extreme, nor need any serious physical symptoms, at once, arise from the wounds made by the nails in the hands and feet, supposing they were nailed, which was not invariably the case. When exhaustion set in, and hunger, thirst, and nervous irritation had done their work, the agony of the sufferer must have been terrible; and the more terrible that, in the absence of any effectual disturbance of the machinery of physical life, it might be prolonged for many hours, or even days. Temperate, strong men, such as were the ordinary Galilean peasants, might live for several days on the cross."[2]

During the reign of Louis XV. of France, several women, religious enthusiasts, called convulsionaires, voluntarily underwent crucifixion. Dr. Meraud relates that he was present at the crucifixion of two females, named Sister Rachel and Sister Felicité. They were laid down, fixed by nails five inches long, *driven firmly through both hands and feet* into the wood of which the crosses were made. The crosses were then raised to a vertical position. In this manner they remained nailed, while other ceremonies of these fanatics proceeded. Sister Rachel, who had been first crucified, was then

[1] *See* "Life of Flavius Josephus."

[2] "Science and Christian Tradition," p. 279, in Vol. v. of Huxley's collected works, published by Macmillan & Co., 1894.

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taken down; *she lost very little blood.* Sister Felicité was afterwards taken from her cross. Three small basons, called palettes, full of blood, flowed from her hands and feet. Their wounds were then dressed, and the meeting terminated. Sister Felicité declared that it was the twenty-first time *she had undergone crucifixion.*[1]

It has apparently been overlooked that, *primâ facie, biblical evidence* exists to prove the body of Jesus was not seriously injured on the cross, in those narratives which record his being able to walk so soon after his release from it. There is no reason to suppose anything miraculous in the power of locomotion he then possessed. Had the injuries to his feet been extreme, the inflammation caused by the wound would doubtless have obliged him to rest until they were healed. Had walking caused much distress we may properly conclude he could not, or would not have walked. He had at all times been liable to the ordinary accidents and pains of humanity. Doubtless had he cut himself while working at his carpenter's bench bleeding would have resulted, and if seriously hurt, even faintness or swooning. We know he felt hunger when, with his disciples, he wandered in need and in search of food along the by-ways of Judea,[2] just as he languished for nourishment after his temporary repose or sleep in the cool seclusion of the sepulchre.

One can hardly help surmising what would have been the result had Jesus met a similar fate to that of John the Baptist, instead of being crucified. In such a case no possible doubt could have existed as to his decease, had sufficient proof of his decapitation existed.

[1] "Penny Cyclopædia," article "Cross."

[2] Matthew xxi. 18; and Mark xi. 12.

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As it is, some anxious and conscientious persons, longing above all things for the truth, will in every age, justly question whether Jesus ever really died "the death of the cross." The fact recorded that the legs of Jesus were not broken, as were those of the two malefactors crucified at the same time, indicates apparently a marked exception in his favour, and seems to show his death was not really intended.

If Jesus did survive his crucifixion, as we conceive is most probable, he may himself have entertained the idea that his restoration from a state of insensibility was an actual return from death to life, a true resurrection as far as this means revivification. For it seems impossible to regard the return of Jesus from the tomb before corruption had even begun its work upon him, as in the slightest degree emblematic of that victory over the grave which is promised to the just in some parts of the Scripture. The bodies of these have been dissolved into their primitive elements, the earthly particles have returned to the earth, the gaseous constituents to the atmosphere. The bodies of millions, who lived long ago, have, since they walked the earth, become, over and over again, portions of other organic and animated existences, on land, in the air and in water. Doubtless could we trace individual atoms we should find that what once formed parts of the bodies of men, women and children in times of old, are now sustaining vegetable and animal life, giving strength to the oak, fragrance to the rose, speed to the antelope, and power to the lion.

"The very dust we tread upon was once alive;" and our great poet, who was one of Nature's true prophets and interpreters, must have been influenced by a

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consciousness of the perpetual mutation of terrestrial atoms when he wrote of Ophelia—

> "Lay her in the earth;
> And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
> May violets spring!"

The resurrection of Jesus was not "the first fruits" of bodies whose constituents have been dispersed in the usual way, nor even typical of such a one as Ezekiel describes as taking place in the valley of dry bones, when, "behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone." And "the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them." The vital wind was called for by the prophet in these words, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Then "the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."[1]

The resurrection of Jesus was not like this, when the bones came together, bone to bone; much less did it resemble that which John saw in the apocalyptic vision, when "the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (marginal reading, 'the grave') delivered up the dead which were in them."[2] The body of Jesus was in the cave-sepulchre—in which there was room to stand, sit and move about[3]—but a few hours, *if even so long as this.* Death froze it not with his icy fingers; the grace of manhood never left his face, though when he came forth the holes made by the nails, could be seen in his hands. If death was really conquered, the signs of his

[1] Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-10. [2] Revelation xx. 13. [3] Mark xvi. 5.

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temporary triumph were not effaced in the body Jesus once more presented to his disciples, and which might reasonably have been expected to become incomparably more celestial than the one which had been so ignominiously fastened to the cross. Thus, although the saints are themselves promised "glorified bodies" in the general resurrection, Jesus himself had, when *he* rose, the same natural body as he laid down, and it appears from what is afterwards recorded, that it still required the same sustenance as it was accustomed to before for its support and comfort. If sown "a natural body," it presented no signs whatever of being a "spiritual body,"[1] but quite the reverse. Keim, in his exhaustive history of Jesus of Nazara, pertinently points out the inconsistency of ascribing to one who has crept half-dead out of the grave, the ability to figure as one who has victoriously risen, and this incongruity, he says, has been noticed by several writers, among others, by Strauss and Neander.

Though Jesus is recorded to have said, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew xii. 40); this, in fact, according to subsequent narratives, was not so, as we learn he was placed in the sepulchre late on Friday, and was not to be found there "early" on the day after the Jewish sabbath (Luke xxiv. 22). How long he was in the tomb we know not—it may have been only a few hours—there is nothing to show the contrary.

John's Gospel, as veracious history, is greatly doubted by scholars. This is an important fact, as the piercing

[1] Corinthians xv. 44.

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of the side of Jesus with a spear is only recorded in this book, and appears really to have been related in order to show the fulfilment of a presumed prophecy, "They shall look on him whom they pierced;" which sentence, though in our version of Psalms xxii. 16, is not in the original Hebrew. These words, like many others in the New Testament, are taken from the Septuagint. This circumstance is of great importance, as it bears seriously on the question as to whether the injuries Jesus suffered on the cross were sufficient to cause his death. John, also, is the only evangelist to mention the embalming of Jesus. Matthew says he was simply wrapped "in a clean linen cloth," Matthew xxvii. 59. See also to the same effect Mark xv. 46, and Luke xxiii. 53. Compare, as regards the embalming, Mark xvi. 1, with John xix. 39, 40.

As the four Gospels are the only source whence is derived the history of Jesus, we have, necessarily, in studying them, to eliminate from these records, as far as we can, the improbable and the impossible, at all events humanly speaking. They abound, as we all know, with numerous instances of both these conditions. Not the least extraordinary of them are those statements which tell us Jesus was not recognized by the very persons who had known him long and intimately, when they first saw him on his reappearance, after his short seclusion in the sepulchre. Matthew, it is true, is free from this difficulty, as he informs us that when Mary Magdalene, and "the other Mary," met Jesus on the first occasion, they knew and worshipped him. The evangelist John, on the contrary, narrates that when Mary Magdalene first saw Jesus, she thought he was the

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gardener, and only knew him when he addressed her by name. But the most remarkable of all is the history of this last-named writer, respecting the appearance of Jesus to the apostles. He first shows himself, St. John tells us, to them in the evening, when they were assembled together on the first day of the week, after the crucifixion. He makes himself known to them all, except to Thomas, called Didymus, who was not with them on this occasion, and who was quite incredulous when informed that Jesus was risen. But *eight days afterwards,* when all the disciples were once more gathered together, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and convinced Thomas by manual proof of his identity. How interesting it would be now if we had a reliable narrative of the events of those eight days as regards Jesus, where he lodged, with whom he ate, drank and conversed. Doubtless, after all he had gone through during the previous and recent days, rest, seclusion, peace and quietness would be doubly acceptable to him. That Jesus needed food from the first, after his presumed resurrection, is admitted in the New Testament, and will be further dwelt upon as we proceed. After the two interviews with Jesus last recorded, in which the apostles all recognized and acknowledged him their master and now risen teacher, we are told further on, that when he presented himself to them shortly afterwards at the sea of Tiberias, the very same Thomas already mentioned, Peter, Nathaniel of Cana, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples not named, each and all failed to perceive who he was. It was only after the miraculous draught of fishes that Peter knew him, and said, "It is the Lord."

It seems evident that these discordant details in the

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several Gospels have arisen from their writers being desirous to give a dramatic effect to their histories. Not one of them probably conceived that accounts would be given by others of the transactions each related, different to his own, or that in times to come, doubters would arise to dispute and question what they so confidently wrote for the information of the Church at large.

Luke, relating what he had been told by others concerning Jesus, represents him as doing his utmost to persuade the apostles, who were frightened at his reappearance among them, of his bodily existence,—that he was not a spirit. He asked them to handle him, he showed his hands and his feet; but it is very significant that not a word is said of the wound in the side as described by John, and which would doubtless have been also alluded to in this place, had the writer of the Gospel ascribed to Luke ever heard of it.

Then we are further told, "He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."[1] Surely, Jesus ate on this occasion because his body was yet subject to the pain of gnawing want—to hunger, the inseparable condition of mortal existence. John also tells us that on one occasion, after the resuscitation of Jesus, when the disciples left their boat at his invitation, that as soon as they were come to land, "they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread,"[2] which certainly suggests the idea that Jesus had been dining, or was about to dine, alone, before they came. Assuredly, it is difficult to understand why a body that henceforth

[1] Luke xxiv. 41-43. [2] John xxi. 9.

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was to be beyond the reach of death, one that shortly was to be translated to heaven itself, should require or even receive food again, for eating implies hunger, desire, digestion, renovation of parts, and the elimination of waste products.

The writer of the fourth Gospel tells us that when the disciples were assembled together in the evening of the reputed resurrection day, Jesus appeared among them, and, after saluting them, he "breathed on them."[1] The act thus mentioned, that of breathing, is one performed by all, at least, of the higher orders of creation, and is essential to life. Not to breathe is to die. "Whatever breathes and draws in draughts of air," says one of the earliest Christian writers, "to be sent back in the same way, must be mortal, by feeding on the atmosphere."[2] A modern chemist tells us exactly the same thing. He says, "The true external cause of death is the respiratory process, that is, the action of the atmosphere."[3] And he further remarks that "the first conditions of animal life are nutricious matters and oxygen introduced into the system."[4]

It appears, from all we read, that at the exact time Jesus is said to have been the conqueror of death, the very cause of death, as the sequel of life, that is, the destructive action of the oxygen of the air, was acting on the body so lately raised from the tomb; asserting its power over its several members, altering its substance, disintegrating its parts, and acting on the brain itself. All this is implied in the accounts we have of Jesus partaking of food. Even to the last, we know, from the

[1] John xxi. 22.
[2] "Arnobius adversus Gentes.'
[3] Liebig's "Animal Chemistry."
[4] Ibid.

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accounts given us, that his wants were actual, and that sustenance was necessary to prevent a real death ensuing from starvation.

If the dead faint that supervened at the extremity of the sufferings felt by Jesus on the cross had been fatal, then instantly would the work of decomposition, invisibly but most surely, have commenced its work, as in all other instances of real death. If such a return of his body to its original constituents did not begin, then his apparent decease was simply a case of suspended animation, and it cannot, in honest truthfulness, be considered as a death, nor his revival from it a resurrection from the dead. The fact that any creature needed but a single meal would be an all-convincing evidence of its mortal nature, and of the ultimate triumph of death over its vital energies.

Admitting that Jesus did not expire on the cross, but that he revived in the sepulchre, and shortly afterwards left the scene of his sufferings, retiring to Galilee, we can readily understand what is recorded of his several interviews with his disciples at different and lengthened periods of time. Both he and they may have really cherished the delusion, and propagated the belief, that death had been actually conquered by him, ignoring the conclusions to the contrary which his eating and drinking would, to thoughtful and dispassionate minds, naturally suggest. In such a case, while the expectation of a temporal Messianic reign over Israel was abandoned, that of a spiritual and more extended dominion over both Jews and Gentiles exalted their hopes and stimulated their zeal. This mode of viewing the meagre accounts we have of his acts before and after he left Jerusalem is

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not unreasonable. And if, some time afterwards, Jesus really died, alone or with some of his disciples with him to soothe his last moments, the report of his ascension could easily have arisen among that superstitious sect, always on the look-out for prodigies, and willing to believe anything rather than yield up their anticipations. In confirmation of these thoughts, it may be mentioned that neither Matthew nor John gives us any particulars respecting the ascension of Jesus, while the reference to it in the second Gospel is contained in an interpolated passage. Besides, Mark was not an eye-witness of the life or death of Jesus. We are thus thrown upon what is related of the ascension in the third Gospel and in Acts, both of which books are ascribed, perhaps correctly, to the same author, Luke. But Luke himself was not an eye-witness of what he relates; he speaks only of what others had "delivered" unto him, as he informs us himself.[1]

Jesus was only "seen" occasionally by his disciples, and not by "all the people," after his supposed resurrection; but it is distinctly recorded that he both ate and drank with Peter and other chosen apostles and "witnesses,"[2] which categorical statement quite disposes of the idea, so commonly entertained, that he disappeared from the world almost immediately after his first interviews with them. Even if the literal accuracy of the Acts of the Apostles is impugned, the passage we have cited, with others in the Gospels already noticed, certainly goes to prove that the members of the early Church firmly believed that Jesus lived for a considerable

[1] Luke i. 2. [2] Acts x. 4.

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time among his most intimate and former associates and followers, and performed while with them all the functions essential to a true human existence. The evidences, in fact, that Jesus was "alive" actually, like others, after his passion, are so numerous, that they are spoken of as "*many infallible* proofs."[1]

Besides the forty days mentioned in Acts during which Jesus lived, eating and drinking with his disciples, there were traditions in the early Church which show there were those in it who believed that he was not finally removed from earth till many months or years after his supposed resurrection. The Rev. Dr. Martineau, in his recent review of the Gospel of St. Peter, cites three authorities bearing upon this subject, for which he makes acknowledgment to a German critic, Harnack. These are as follows:—

"Valentinians, according to Iren. I. iii. 2: A year and a half after resurrection."

"Ascensio Isaiae (a Christianized Jewish apocalypse): 545 days after resurrection."

"Pistis Sophia (a Christianized Jewish apocalypse): eleven years after resurrection."[2]

The bodily system of Jesus probably suffered such a shock from the tortures of the cross as to prevent him from displaying his former energy of character, never of a very marked degree. He lived henceforth in that solitude to which he had been partial in former days. When he did again meet with his disciples, from time to time, he may have kept up, by "the breaking of bread," the remembrance of the night of his betrayal. Luke

[1] Acts i. 3.

[2] *See* "*The Nineteenth Century*," June 1893, p. 921.

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records one such touching interview; and Paul, as we shall have further to notice, tells us that he "received" personally and direct from Jesus the full details of that solemn memorial festival. This interview between Jesus and Paul, so distinctly spoken of by the latter in the passage to which we refer, must have been a considerable period after the time of the exit of the former from the sepulchre. If we are allowed to ignore the various narratives of Paul's conversion, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, and may depend solely and simply on *his own account* of this event as given in his epistles, we think the evidence, indubitably, points to the conclusion that Paul both saw and conversed with Jesus, while the latter was on earth. Thus, after telling how Jesus was seen, of Cephas, of all the apostles, of five hundred brethren at once, of James, and a second time of all the apostles (compare verses 5 and 7 of 1 Corinthians xv.), who all, of course, saw Jesus *in the flesh;* some of them, if not all, eating and drinking with him as already mentioned; he says that Jesus was seen finally by himself.[1] Now, Paul does not distinguish the way in which he saw Jesus from the mode in which the other apostles and brethren saw him; he merely tells us he beheld Jesus last in the order of time.

It has been proved from New Testament data that Jesus lived a considerable time after his crucifixion. One passage says "forty days,"[2] or nearly six weeks. But this term was a very undecided one with the Jews; with them almost any uncertain period was thus described. The chief fact brought to our conviction,

[1] 1 Corinthians xv. 8 [2] Acts i. 3.

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is that Jesus moved from time to time among the apostles as in the days of old. There is nothing whatever to show that he did not live two, or even three years in their society after he retired to Galilee. It is quite probable that he did so. There is no chronological difficulty in the belief that the conversion of St. Paul took place in the lifetime of Jesus. The ordinary reference Bible gives a period of two years between the crucifixion and that event, making the first to have occurred A.D. 33, and the latter A.D. 35. St. Paul may, in previous days, have been among the incredulous Jews who listened to the teachings of Jesus, and, as an ardent and unbelieving Pharisee, rejected them, becoming at last a persecutor of the brethren. Thus, when writing to the Galatians, he reminds them how in times past he persecuted the Church of God and wasted it.[1] But he declares in the same epistle that he received the Gospel *only* "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Then he confirms the impression that Jesus himself conversed with him, when he wrote as follows to the Corinthians:— "For," he says, "*I have received of the Lord* that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."[2]

[1] Galatians i. 3. [2] 1 Corinthians xi. 23-26.

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The foregoing, without doubt, reads like the result of an actual conversation between Jesus and the apostle, and the idea that they met in intimate intercourse more than once, is confirmed by what St. Paul also wrote to the Thessalonians. In his first epistle to them, he says, "For this we say unto you by *the word of the Lord*, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."[1]

What other conclusion can be drawn from the foregoing, than that St. Paul received verbally from Jesus himself the history of the Eucharistic sacrament, and also the assurance of his second advent, fallacious as the latter promise has turned out to be, at least, as occurring in the lifetime of the apostle.

Had Paul known anything that was positive and convincing about the circumstances of the reported ascension, he would surely have strengthened his arguments respecting the doctrine of the general resurrection when writing to the Corinthians on this subject, by pointing to, and dwelling upon this manifest victory on the part of Jesus over the powers of death and of the grave. For the ascension of Jesus is of far more consequence to the perfection of the Christian system than even his apparent resurrection. But Paul has

[1] 1 Thessalonians iv. 15-17.

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nothing to tell us of his own knowledge of this last and crowning event in the history of Jesus. Immediately after his conversion, he tells us, quite contrary to the apocryphal account in the Acts,[1] that he did not go up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before him, but that he went forthwith in Arabia.[2] It is most likely that during his absence in that country Jesus finally died, and was privately interred in the usual manner, among his own people.

We must necessarily prefer Paul's own account of his conversion to that of any other person. His conduct in going into Arabia is in strict accordance with the instructions which the synoptical Gospels represent Jesus as giving to the apostles, when he reappeared again among them, that they should "teach all nations."

To return, however, to the ascension. Paul's knowledge of this mythical event was no doubt similar to that possessed by Luke, it was "delivered" to him by others. Whenever he refers to it, he simply assumes the truth of this extraordinary phenomenon. Thus, he tells us Jesus is at the right hand of God;[3] that he ascended up on high;[4] and that he was received up into glory.[5] We have, in fact, nowhere an apostle's own testimony that he saw Jesus ascend into heaven. All is traditional or hearsay. Peter speaks of Jesus as having gone into heaven,[6] but he does not say he saw him arise; and John, if the author of the Gospels and Epistles that bear his name, gives no evidence in them on this subject.

Jesus was on earth at least forty days or *nearly six*

[1] Acts ix. 26, 27, 28. [2] Galatians i. 17. [3] Romans viii. 34.
[4] Ephesians iv. 9. [5] 1 Timothy iii. 16. [6] 1 Peter iii. 22.

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weeks after his reappearance to his disciples, and probably for a much longer period. He would not, of course, go in and out among them in a state of nudity, he would necessarily wear habiliments, having, it may be presumed, occasionally to dress and undress, and sometimes to assume fresh attire. The account in Luke certainly indicates he ascended dressed as usual, thus taking not only his own material body, but also his material clothes into heaven! The whole of the Gospel history of the ascension, meagre though it is, is in remarkable contradiction to the assurance of the Apostle Paul when writing of the same event, for the latter believer positively assures us that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven."[1] It appears quite apparent from these words that he was unacquainted with the accounts of the ascension as given in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

How the history of the ascension originated no one can now tell, but it appears that once it was circulated, to have passed unquestioned among the disciples. In Mark we read that Jesus "was received up into heaven,"[2] but this is in a disputed, or rather we may say in a spurious passage. Luke says that when Jesus had blessed his disciples "he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven," but he saw not this himself. Then *the place* of the ascension is left very dubious. Matthew appears to indicate a mountain in Galilee as the proper locality. Luke says it occurred in Bethany, and the Acts of the Apostles tell us that, at another time and another place, viz., the Mount of Olives, Jesus

[1] 1 Corinthians xv. 50. [2] Mark xvi. 19.

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"was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

This is all the historical evidence, if indeed it is worthy of that name, which exists of the most miraculous and important event ever said to have happened, and which, if true, puts the seal to the affirmed atonement of Jesus for the sins of mankind, and of God's reconcilement to the human race. The ascension of Jesus is undoubtedly of infinitely more consequence than his resurrection, if either be necessary to prove that God is no longer man's implacable foe, his consuming adversary, although at the same time the Author of his being, and the First Cause of all the circumstances, conditions and tendencies which from birth to death mould his life, and determine every deed of his mysterious and ephemeral existence. "Criticism has shown," says Keim, one of the most recent and impartial writers on the life of Jesus, "that the visible ascension is one of the latest and most untrustworthy of the offshoots of the resurrection myth; and that, therefore, Christianity need not exhaust itself in struggles with the laws of the universe, of gravity, of the atmosphere and telluric attraction, or in explanations of the nature of heaven, which is to be sought, not in the mere clouds or in the blue sky, but at most only in the totality of myriads of individual stars. . . . And though the popular imagination is still most fascinated by the incomprehensible, in a material clothing, the simplest understanding can in these days perceive that the ascension miracle, with all its pretence and all its audacity, is merely a miracle of illusion. . . . Consequently, modern Christians, compelled to give up thus completely, the greatest miracle, must *believe* in Jesus's

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entrance into heaven simply upon the assurance of the angels, or better—like the apostles themselves, on the evidence of their own spiritual conviction." [1]

It need not surprise us that we have no further record of the life of Jesus after he revived from the injuries suffered in his crucifixion, beyond his living with his disciples privately, but not displaying himself "to all the people" (Acts x. 41), any more than the fact that we have no details of about thirty years of his history previous to his being arraigned before Pilate. The writers of the Gospels and of the Acts of the Apostles were not skilled biographers, and besides could not have had the slightest idea of the critical skill future generations would direct towards these writings, nor of the imperfections they most certainly contain. It is often forgotten, moreover, that as the evangelists and apostles expected the bodily return of Jesus during the lifetime of some of themselves, the object of writing a full history of his life, presuming it was known to them, would not be apparent—the world and all in it being doomed to an early dissolution or transformation. "Behold," said one of them, "we look for new heavens and a new earth."

The true history of the life and death of Jesus will never be fully known, but it is very probable that he retired into some secluded retreat among those who had loved him so well and who still gathered around him in reverential admiration and worship, and was, sooner or later, like the rest of our race, gathered to his permanent repose in some obscure and retired spot. A modern

[1] "The History of Jesus of Nazara," by Dr. Theodor Keim, translated by Arthur Ransom. Vol. vi., pp. 380-382. Published 1883.

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poet expresses these ideas in the words which follow :—

> "But he is dead. Far hence he lies
> In some lone Syrian town,
> And on his grave, with shining eyes,
> The Syrian stars look down."[1]

Whatever difficulties offer themselves to the natural and rational presentation we have made of the history of the founder of Christianity in the foregoing pages, they are infinitesimal to those still more formidable ones that intrude themselves in battalions upon the least unthinking orthodox student of the New Testament. Such a one is, however, generally bound inextricably in spiritual fetters by the teachings of the Christian rabbis, to whose influence he has been subjected, perhaps from infancy. The Gospels, as has been abundantly shown, abound with the most irreconcilable narratives, although to doubt them in the slightest degree is rank and unpardonable heresy. Believe! believe! believe! is ever the ecclesiastical cry, though extended knowledge, physical science, exalted morality, refined taste, and an enlightened conscience all protest and rebel against this attempted suppression and usurpation of thought by often ignorant and, generally, tyrannical, clerics and priests.

Doubtless, many readers of this work will differ from what it contains, and are welcome to do so; but we are persuaded that not a few intelligent, upright and independent thinkers will be seriously influenced in favour of some, if not all, of the suggestions, hypotheses,

[1] Matthew Arnold.

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and conclusions that have been advanced, and based on such evidence of all kinds as is accessible in the present day. To use this evidence fairly, and as far as possible with an unbiassed judgment, is the only way to arrive at even an approximate conception of the birth, life, and death of Jesus.

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